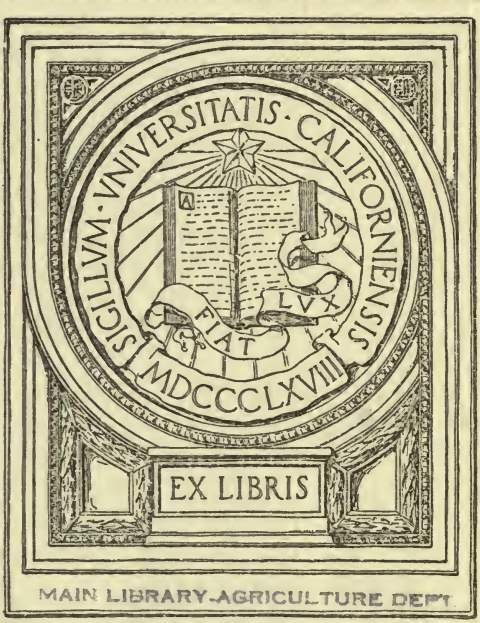
The CHURCH IN RURAL AMERICA

GARLAND A. BRICKER



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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE CHURCH IN RURAL AMERICA

BY

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in Syracuse University, and
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Country Church
Problem"

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TO
DR. THOMAS HUFFMAN CAMPBELL,
FRIEND

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THE FARMER'S SONG OF PRAISE

Blessed is the love of God
That hovers o'er the land,
Sending rain from distant seas
To drench the parching sand.
Glory, praise and honor
Our God and nature's King!
Sending rain from distant seas
To drench the parching sand.

Praise the Lord for warmth and glow
From out the summer sky,
Making seed and seedlings grow
As days and weeks go by.
Glory, praise and honor
Our God and nature's King!
Making seed and seedlings grow
As days and weeks go by.

Glory be to him who sends
To earth the light of day,
Urging leaf and bud and plant
To grow in nature's way.
Glory, praise and honor
Our God and nature's King!
Urging leaf and bud and plant
To grow in nature's way.

Gratitude shall ever find
A place in every breast,
Gaining strength and peace of mind
From land so greatly blessed.
Glory, praise and honor
Our God and nature's King!
Gaining strength and peace of mind
From land so greatly blessed.

PREFACE

IN writing the following pages, I have had in mind the one idea of presenting an interpretation of the relation of the country church to the new ruralism that has in very recent years developed in connection with a new era in the country life of America.

The presentation is chiefly from the layman's point of view, but the writer is also conversant with the ministerial position, and this has not been neglected. The problems of the country church will be solved only through the cordial and Christian co-operation of pastor and people.

The country church has nothing to fear, but much to gain, from the new ruralism. On the other hand, the new ruralism has yet to receive its greatest contribution—the consecrating influence of the Christian church, which will make of the new ruralism a true servant and blessing for humanity.

No one yet knows the exact formula that will solve the country church problem; but I believe it is in the process of formation.

This book has been written with the purpose of aiding in its solution. A few important considerations of the church and country life and their relationships are herewith presented in a nutshell. The writer trusts the very briefness of his statement will be the cause of its wider service. G. A. B.

Syracuse University.

I

THE NEW RURALISM AND THE COUNTRY CHURCH

THE most casual observer can readily discern that a new civilization is rapidly developing in rural America. New systems and standards, new methods and processes, new aims and ideals, and a new agriculture and farmer have ushered in the new age, and are building a new structure upon the firm foundation which the pioneers hewed out of the wilderness. The chief factors in the building of the new rural civilization are:[1]

1. The modern industrial system.
2. The new agriculture.
3. The new farmer.
4. New transportation facilities.
5. New transmitters of intelligence.
6. A new country.
7. A new country people.
8. A new spirit of co-operation.

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[1]Cf. Chapter III. of G. Walter Fisk's "The Challenge of the Country." Association Press, New York City.

9. A new rural government.
10. New aims and ideals.
11. Reorganized rural institutions, including a new country church.

The development of the modern industrial system[1] has profoundly influenced life in the

A Modern Co-operative Farmers' Creamery.

rural districts. Formerly, the country home was a hive of industry where the raw materials produced on the farm were manufactured into many and varied articles. At one time, nearly all the home furnishings, the food and raiment for the family, and the farm equip-

[1]See pp. 118-120 of Charles W. Dahlinger's "The New Agrarianism." G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York City.

ment, were made on the farm by the farmer and his family, or by the local community artisan. To-day nearly all the manufacturing industries have disappeared from the country and are now concentrated in the large factories of the cities and towns. Recognizing the convenience and economy of this new industrial system, even the farmer himself has built a new manufacturing system on the factory plan, as the creamery, the cannery, and similar institutions. So completely has this transfer of manufacturing been made that many of the arts and processes formerly used on the farm have now quite disappeared from the knowledge of the present generation of country people. In many communities one would have to search for some time before finding an individual who could spin woolen yarn from the raw wool, or weave cloth, or, before the Great War, knit stockings; who could tan leather, or make a pair of shoes; who could tell the medicinal properties of the herbs, or prepare them for the treatment of common ailments; who could make paints, dyes, paste, cheese, nails, knives, brooms, ropes or barrels; or who could build a buggy or a wagon. All these articles, and many others not formerly known, are now

bought complete or ready for use for a given price from the community merchant, who acts as a distributor for the factories; or from a great department store, hundreds of miles away, through the media of the illustrated catalogue, the mail service, the parcel post or express system, and the postal money-order or the banks.

As a result of the new industrial system, the country people have been relieved from the necessity of making many articles, the manufacture of which was once considered a part of the regular farm routine. On this account an enormous amount of time has been developed for the rural people, which may be spent in other activities than formerly. To-day the time is spent in reading, travel, pleasure-seeking, educational activities, developing the farm and the farm home, and in loafing.

When the demand for workers came from the factories in the cities, thousands of the country people moved there. Higher wages attracted the farm-hands, better opportunities for success and fame drew the energetic and ambitious country youths and maidens, and the comforts and conveniences of the city home life were welcomed by the retired farmer. Thus was the country more than deci-

mated of its population. However, the diminished rural population gave rise to new needs and enterprises, the results of which have transformed the rural civilization in America. The social shift cityward was not wholly for the worse.

A new agriculture has developed with the new industrialism. We used to say, "Anybody can farm." That was only another way of saying that every one knew all there was then known on the subject, and, as there were but few principles and facts to be followed, almost anybody could engage in the industry with assured success. But we no longer speak as we used to. During the past half-century, the agricultural colleges and experiment stations of the nation have been ferreting out the facts of nature, and from these have drawn many principles and laws applicable to plant and animal production. There is now a large body of facts, principles, laws and processes that must be known even to the average farmer, if he desires to meet with only a mediocre degree of success in this field of human endeavor.[1]

[1]Cf. the author's "Agricultural Education for Teachers," p. 24. American Book Company, Cincinnati, .O

See also Chapter IV. of G. Walter Fisk's "The Challenge of the Country." Association Press, New York City.

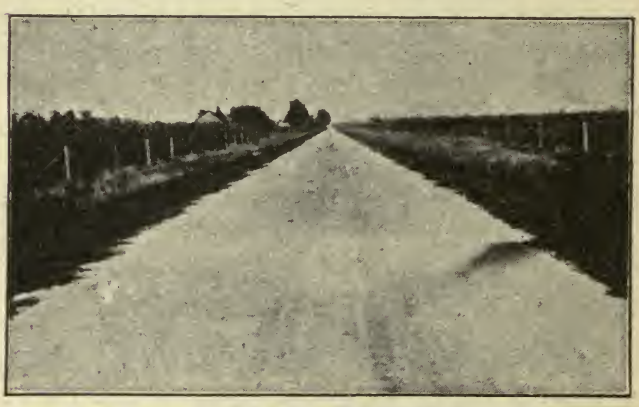
A new farmer has been developed by the new agriculture, and the new sociological, new economic, new civic, new educational and new religious conditions with which he is compelled to live. The new farmer is an educated man, often a college graduate, for, in this day and age of the world, it takes brains to farm. A twentieth-century farmer must have more or less thorough knowledge of botany, zoology, chemistry, physics, meteorology, bacteriology, geology, mechanics, veterinary medicine, law, economics and business, besides a knowledge of the branches usually taught in the elementary schools. Men that farm by rote seldom make good farmers. Not all the duties of the farm can be reduced to automatisms, because they are too many and too varied. A large share of them depends upon the natural conditions of weather, soil, air and sunlight. Some of the farmwork may be done indoors, but most of it is done under the open sky. To perfectly adapt and successfully apply the principles of agriculture under these varied conditions, which are multitudinous in number, one must have a superior intelligence—an intelligence above that of the average man. In the factory, the shop, the office and the store, one does not meet

with such an infinite variety of conditions. The store has its regular system and routine; the office, its regular business forms and card indexes; the shop, its comparatively small round of labor; and the factory, a single, simple piece of work for each person. Not very complex thought processes are involved in the work of the man who operates a single machine in a factory from day to day throughout the year, or who plugs the air-holes in the tin cans in a canning factory; nor the woman who sews the single seam in a certain garment, or who operates the typewriter eight hours a day. Indeed, the young man who aspires to the high place of an agriculturist, and to success and fame as a countryman, must be the possessor of a training surpassed by no other individual.[1]

Transportation facilities of a new type, that combine great power and speed—the steam and electric railways, good roads and the automobile—have contributed, in a wonderful degree, to annihilate distances. This means that new markets for buying and selling have opened up for the farmer, and that the circumference of his business possibilities

[1]Bricker's "Agricultural Education for Teachers," pp. 24, 25.

has been extended at least a hundred-fold. A greater portion of humanity is now dependent on him than formerly, and his opportunities for competing with others have been enlarged, while he finds that his competitors are also greatly increased in number. He is,



Improved Roads Lie Like Great White Ribbons Between the Waving Fields.

therefore, forced to become a man of larger affairs and keener understanding. His intellectual life is thus stimulated, and his outlook upon the world greatly broadened. The automobile and the interurban car make it possible for him to enjoy the active social relationships of people many times farther away than it was possible when he had to depend

upon the horse. The social life of the farm has been enhanced, and there is gradually growing up in the country a true rural aristocracy of a very high type.

New transmitters of intelligence have become available to the country. The telephone and the daily delivery of mail have obliterated the isolation so well preserved to only a half generation ago. By the use of the community telephone, often owned by the farmers themselves, the whole countryside is welded together, and its news becomes known in each home. Engagements are made by wire, social meetings are arranged, business transacted, and the young people may have visits daily with one another. The daily papers from the urban centers bring to the family the latest intelligence of the world's progress. The Government acts as the farmer's messenger quite as efficiently as for the most favored citizen.

A new country has developed. The pioneer stages have, in most States, been passed; the old wilderness and wild lands have been conquered and made productive. Improved fences everywhere appear, new buildings of larger and more substantial type are dotting the land, swamps are drained and the courses

of streams changed, improved roads lie like great, white ribbons between the waving fields, farms have been reconstructed on new plans of management, landscape architecture is beginning to make itself felt in its vernal beauty, and rural America is not only possessed and conquered, but is being improved. Efficiency is taking hold of agriculture and rural life as well as of the city.

A new people has arisen to take possession of the land. In former years, groups of foreign peoples settled here and there throughout the country, making a motley population of distinct groups. While this situation is not yet wholly past, still, the greater portion of the farm population of the nation is rapidly throwing off its provincialisms and becoming molded into the new product of American ruralism. The new American farmer is everywhere recognized as a man of really superior type.

The new spirit of co-operation is abroad in the country. One of the outstanding characteristics of the old-time farmer was his uncompromising individualism, backed by a harsh suspicion and haughty independence. It is not our purpose to condemn these stern characters of the pioneer and his sons, nor

are we sure that these same characters, somewhat modified by a new age, may not some day become the basic elements and saving factors in the welfare of our national life. But these characters, though strong in country people, have been modified—that is the essential thing—to fit the new ruralism, and, as a result of this, the new farmer is co-operating with his fellows in business, in government, in social efforts, and, to some extent, in religious matters. The new motto of the country people is coming to be, "Stand with anybody who is right, but part with him when he goes wrong." Co-operative associations are springing up on every hand, and the new farmer is not to-day living unto himself alone, but is benefiting his neighbors as well as himself by co-operating with them in the common and necessary features of the new ruralism.

A new rural government, more centralized and with greater power, has taken the place of the almost purely local type of past generations. Not long ago the country justice of the peace held a civic position in the community very similar to the weight and dignity of our judgeship of to-day. But the justice and his court have passed, and with it the

township civil officers have been stripped of their former authority, and the county has become the unit of civil administration in the country.

New aims and ideals have come into the country life and are beginning to make themselves felt. Mere drudgery, for example, is no longer considered a virtue. Labor has as much dignity as ever, provided it is associated with brains. The "book farmer" is the man who keeps his farm free from mortgage and who is able to write checks on his bank account. It is considered not sufficient merely to secure a sustenance from the farm, but to make a living—and a good one at that.

The farm must be well treated, not depleted, and in return must provide food, clothing and shelter as heretofore, only of a better quality; must supply the means of culture and refinement—art, literature and music—for the home, and a college education for the young people. There must, in addition, be a bank account, a "safety" fund for the home, and an allowance for travel and pleasure for every member of the farm home, and hospitality for all who frequent it.

The rural institutions are molting. The new life of the country is larger, stronger,

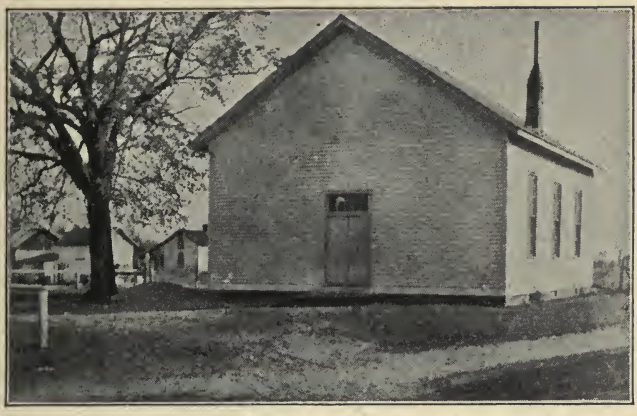
more buoyant and richer than the old. It must have room to grow, and newer channels through which to flow and express itself. As this lusty infant develops, the whole rural world is bending its energies to contribute to its welfare.

The new graded, centralized school is displacing the one-room, ungraded type, wherever possible; and, where not possible, the old-time, one-room school is being transformed into a new type. In this new school a new education is being taught—an education that makes for efficiency and service in the common as well as in the professional walks of life. The farm life and service receive their full share of attention. Agriculture, domestic science, the manual arts, as well as the "manly" arts, are being taught to the farmer's children. In these new schools all the best of the old *regime* is saved and strengthened by association with the best of the new. The doors of opportunity are opened wider that more of the country youth may enter.

And the country church! That is the last, but not the least. The greatest and the best developments in the processes of nature come last. The country church, quivering on the

brink between two rural civilizations, is about to cast off its old, heavy armor and put on the lighter, more peaceful and more truly serviceable robes of a new age. The churchmen of the country are catching the vision, and they are too sturdy and true to be false to it.

In the light of the new ruralism, very briefly described, the country church must take its cue, and find its development and field of service. It can not separate itself from its fellow rural institutions; indeed, that is not the spirit nor the intention of its Founder. It is to-day finding that, almost unconsciously, its aims and ideals have become a reality in the world, though often clothed in very different robes from what had been expected. Justice, mercy, peace and happiness are becoming tangible realities for the rural parishioner as never before in the history of the world. A new people, in the making of which the church contributed a large share, has arisen around its doors and a new *regime* of government, far more stable and just and merciful than the old, has been instituted. A new agriculture and a new farmer have transformed the environment of the countryside, and a new and better rural America is possessing and improving the land.



Old Type—No Facilities for Social Service.

New Type—A New Social Center.

The new rural church must keep pace with all these. She will catch the spirit of the age and adjust herself to the new ruralism. The new rural church must take a genuine interest in the new agriculture, be a light to its pathway, and inspire it to new conquests for the peace and happiness of humanity. The new farmer will find that the Christian religion has a message for him, and the new rural clergyman must be his equal in training. The Christian service of the church must reach out from rural centers to the whole community population. The automobile drive, instead of the horse drive, must become the measure of the radius to the enlarged circle of service. This will mean consolidation of churches of the same denominations, and *interdenominational co-operation* on a larger scale than hitherto practiced. It will mean renewed consecration of Christian farmers, and the good old farms will gladly produce a tenth more for the support of the kingdom of God in their midst.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Show how the chief factors in building up the new rural civilization are dependent upon one another. Show, by example, how

these factors have had to develop together.

2. How does the modern industrial system differ from the old? Explain how it has reacted on the farmer.

3. What influences have given rise to the new agriculture?

4. Explain why the successful farmer must be a man of superior intelligence.

5. How have the new transportation facilities reacted upon the farmer?

6. How does the farmer get his news? What effect do these modern news-carriers have upon the rural community?

7. What are the indices of a new country in America? of a new people?

8. Give instances of the successful co-operation of farmers.

9. How has the rural government changed?

10. What are some of the new aims and ideals of the farmer?

11. Name the main rural institutions and show how they are changing for the better.

12. Describe the present status of the country church.

13. What is the *role* of the new country church?

14. What responsibility does your church bear to the new ruralism?

II

BACKWARD-LOOKING CHURCHES

IN my travel studies, I have discovered a few churches that may be taken to represent types of the rural church that are passing away. With them are associated certain rural conditions that obtain in their respective communities. They are here introduced as a preliminary study to subsequent chapters.

1. The Desolate Church.

It was a cold winter evening when the writer alighted from the train at a cross-roads community in northwestern Ohio. He was to have been met at the station by the teacher of the local two-room school, but no one was in sight; even the station, a shack of a building, was locked. Not far from the station, at a crossing of the roads, was a country store, in which was located the post-office; two or three dwellings, a blacksmith shop, and a church and a schoolhouse farther up the road.

At the store, the teacher, who lived two and a half miles away, was communicated with over the telephone. After a drive to the teacher's home and return, the handful of people from the school district, who had assembled in the upper room above the store, were met with the intention of addressing them on the advisability of teaching agriculture and domestic science to the children in their local school.

The room was cold, and most of the people sat with their overcoats on. The gasoline stove, with some bricks piled above the burners for the purpose of radiating the heat from the flames, did not make much headway in heating the room. After speaking about ten minutes—minutes that were full of shivers—the speaker stopped and questioned the advisability of continuing the meeting in that room.

After consulting with the teacher and one of the members of the local school board, it was suggested that the meeting be adjourned to the schoolhouse, about a quarter of a mile away. This was done, and the meeting was continued under some difficulties with the heat and light. The meeting was as successful as the meeting-places justified!

On the way to the schoolhouse, we passed a finely painted and well-constructed country church. I very innocently suggested that the meeting might have been held in there.

The answer was anything but encouraging. "Why," said the teacher, "that could never be, because the members of the church would never, never consent to allow a meeting of this kind to be held there." He assured me that the holding of such a meeting there would be regarded by the membership as nothing short of desecration. He intimated that the community itself might so regard it, and that the church might thereby lose its influence with the people!

I hope that the speaker at the educational meeting that evening shall never say anything in any public address that he may not say in the best church in the land.

That church building stood there desolate. Many scores of others like it in type, throughout America, will continue to be desolate, and shunned by the young, and the older people, too, until the Christian membership of such churches realizes that it should be engaged in a social-betterment program; and that to do good to either the individual, or a group of individuals, in furthering their intellec-

tual, their social, their economic, or their spiritual welfare, is more of a Christian accomplishment than mere church attendance.

The rural church must, as an organized body, do its share of social service in the community; and the building must be used as a physical instrument in furthering any program of social betterment. The building, a physical object dedicated to the services of God among men, can never be better used for the work of Christ than when it contributes to the welfare of his followers and the promotion of true Christian social service among the people.

The church should attract people. It should be a social center, a place where they may meet for worship and fellowship, and for mental, moral, spiritual and religious development. It should be a place where meetings, designed to help the individual lives of men and women, may be held, as well as meetings designed to better the community conditions under which those lives are lived.

The advocacy of opening the church building for community meetings does not, of course, imply that the church must be opened to every sort of show that may come down the pike; nor to all forms of amusements and

worldly diversions that the whims of certain characters in the community may urge and promote.

In carrying the "open door" policy to the extreme, there is danger of making the church property a "common" place, a place profane and secular. This must be guarded against by means of the discriminating judgment of a small board of wise, progressive and thoughtful members of the church, of which the minister should be one. But there is a wide margin still to be occupied by the rural church in the social and the intellectual life of the community, and until this waste place is filled by every rural church, we may expect to continue to have desolate churches.

2. The Degenerated Church.

Standing in the midst of one of the most fertile plains of the Middle West, where land has recently been sold at three hundred dollars an acre, there stands a beautiful, well-kept country church building. The farmers keep the building in excellent repair, and the women of the countryside give it an annual housecleaning. It stands in the midst of a beautiful green, along the roadside, glistening in its marble-white coat of paint.

Like many prosperous persons, however, this opulence-reflecting building is only the outward symbol of degeneracy.

Many years ago, in the old church which formerly stood on this same site, a country preacher called sinners unto repentance. The community experienced a great revival, and the work of the Lord prospered. After a time, a new church building was erected. When the minister was called away, the church society gradually lost its interest in religious matters. To-day the people of that large township no longer worship in the Lord's house; for, although they still maintain an interest in the building, no religious meeting has been held there since A. D. 1900. The nearest church is several miles away, so that the children of this whole countryside are growing up without the teachings of the church, the middle-aged live without its strengthening influence upon life and character, and the aged are going to their graves without its comforting gospel.

The people of this rural township do not lack in wealth. Here is found some of the richest soil in the world, and crops produce each year an abundant harvest. The landowners are scientific farmers, and all of them

are wealthy. They know the economics of agriculture, and are winning in their efforts to build personal fortunes from the soil.

The worst misfortune that can befall rural America is to have a money-grasping population upon her soil. Agricultural life must be spiritualized, vitalized, and its wealth consecrated. Until this is done, we will continue to have, throughout the rural districts, degenerate churches.

3. The Deserted Church.

We came to the forks of the road. To the right, the way led up over the side of a rugged and rather steep hill, at the top of which was a small church building.

We had driven many miles that day over dusty country roads, and our young horse was showing evidence of weariness. The way up to the little building was where a road once was, or ought to have been. There certainly was not a road there now; it was a public way, eroded full of gullies so deep that it appeared dangerous to drive a tired horse and narrow buggy over it. So we decided to hitch the horse by the roadside at the foot of the hill, and walk along the side of the way to the building.

The writer was the first to reach the church. Upon approaching the front door, he was surprised to find it ajar.

Entering the building, a most forsaken situation met his view. The benches were made of fence boards. The legs and backs of some of them were loose and tottering. A very old wood-stove was placed in the one aisle that ran up the center of the room.

There was no raised platform, but a space was inclosed by a fence board running in front of the pulpit, and a half fence board ran along either side. These boards were laid flat and nailed upon blocks of wood about fourteen inches high. To enter this inclosure, one needed only to step over the fence!

The pulpit was only a store box set on end. On it was the only new thing that the building possessed. That was a copy of a large family edition of the Holy Bible, and it was the gift of the recent preacher.

The walls were dark and dirty. Two or three old-fashioned oil-lamps hung against the walls. The whole appearance was one of dinginess. Surely no one would care to linger here. It was useless to lock the door.

After surveying the place and taking a few pictures, we retraced our steps to the

conveyance and drove down the road. We met an old, gray-bearded man about a mile from the church site, whom we interrogated about the little hill church. A very interesting bit of history was our reward.

Many, many years ago this rural church was the religious rallying-place of that whole countryside. A light came into the old man's eyes as he related the old-time vigor and power of this church. Then, gradually, a change came. The neighborhood was greatly reduced in population, folks lost their interest in church matters, and finally only seven persons met in the little, old church to worship.

During the past winter a "big meetin'" was held, designed to reawaken the people. A "great" revival took place and seven conversions resulted. The membership of the little church was doubled.

A relative of this old gentleman, who lived in an adjoining county, was engaged to preach at the church twice a month. The new minister, an "exhorter," was to receive a salary of five dollars each preaching-day. But the fund of the little flock was small, and soon it was discovered that nearly all of the church's money was being spent for preach-

ing talent; and that this was being spent by officials who were relatives of the same family and of the minister.

That was an awful discovery! A conspiracy soon developed. A great schism took place in that church, which took half of the membership with it. Again they were seven, most of them elderly persons, and interest again lagged. No one seemed to care for the welfare of the church, it was almost deserted—and the old man's voice trembled. Too weak to do effective work against the devil before, it now was too weak to maintain its own existence. The institutional application of Matt. 12:43-45 was complete.

There are many deserted country churches throughout the land. In many instances, the cause, doubtless, is a natural result of shifts in population to the larger civic centers and to the lands westward. However, many more are caused by the unfortunate stiffening of the upper vertebræ of the spinal column and the adjoining muscles. In these cases, Christianity needs a re-spelling in the lives of those countrymen most concerned; and the new word will look like this—*co-operation.* Christian co-operation in rural church affairs will make religion more effective with farmers.

4. The Abandoned Church.

Far out in the country, at a strategic point among the farmer people in northeastern Ohio, stands what was once a fine rural church building. It is not so fine now. To the writer, and some of his friends, it is known as "God's barn," and no irreverence is intended by naming it so.

I do not know much about the history of this church. Probably it is just as well that little may be said concerning it. This much, however, is true: whereas, only a few years ago, a well-to-do congregation worshiped here, and paid a minister a salary of about twelve hundred dollars, now there is no congregation, no church building, and no preacher.

The nearest church stands several miles away, and the farm families are growing up without any of the religious instruction which is the Christian birthright of every Protestant American.

A farmer purchased the building, and today he is using it as a shelter for his horses and cows.

Enough of that! The sight is a familiar one throughout all the older rural sections of the country.

In the State of New York there are to-day about five hundred rural churches almost ready to close their doors. In Ohio, it is said, there are eight hundred rural churches in the same plight. At this rate there are, in proportion to the rural population, over twenty-one thousand such country churches in the United States. Still, there are those who say there is no rural church problem.

5. The Infidel Church.

When people become prosperous, they tend to forget God. The worst conditions of the rural church often exist where farming is most prosperous. Adverse conditions most often exist because the prosperous farm people are indifferent, and forgetful of the demands of their local churches upon them. However, when prosperous farmers actively oppose the church, then the situation is indeed alarming.

The infidel church is, of course, a misnomer. The phrase is not descriptive of a church, but rather of conditions that obtain in a certain rural community—and there are doubtless similar situations elsewhere. The type represents a rural community problem.

This church stands and struggles for an existence in a rural nest of infidels. They not only profess to believe in no God, but act upon their profession. They are the largest landholders in the community and even threaten the existence of the little local church which is the chief physical symbol of Christianity there. These men boast in their profession, point to their own prosperity, and the lack of it in the church, as proof that their contentions are correct.

I grant that the views of these men are narrow, self-centered and individualistic. No argument, however reasonable, will change them. Their very individualism is opposed to any change of belief. They are not looking for light—only for argument, and for satisfaction in vanquishing—in their own estimation—any one who ventures to challenge them.

The writer once befriended a young man of the country on a transcontinental train, who was bound for a Western ranch from a farm in the Middle West. Before that time, he had never been outside of his native township, and this was his first trip on a train. I soon discovered that he was saturated with

Ingersoll and others of his predecessors of a similar type. His father, grandfather, and other relatives, were infidels, and the usual boastfulness exhibited itself. The young fellow was well informed in all the tenets of his belief, and, though often cornered in argument, still he was not to be convinced against his will.

The incident, though not in any way connected with the church under discussion, yet serves to show the characteristic individualism and doggedness of a certain type of rural mind. Most of us who have been born and reared in the open country, know exactly what this mental trait is, and many of us have had a struggle to rightly apply it, at least in its emphasized form. The characteristic is not to be condemned as such, but only when it is misapplied.

When infidel doctrines get hold of a rural community or rural people, they have great opportunity to grow. There is much time for reading in the winter and for reflection throughout the lonely days in the fields, unaccompanied by one's fellows. On the other hand, there are few agencies in the country to protest against these false doctrines, and those that do exist there are often too weak

to be effective. Hence, the weeds and thistles of infidelity often thrive in rural communities.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Discuss the desolate church and the lessons to be learned from it.

2. Describe the degenerated church and discuss its lessons.

3. What is the one great lesson to be learned from the deserted church?

4. Do you know of an abandoned rural church? What was the reason for its abandonment? Read again the last paragraph under "The Abandoned Church."

5. Recite the cases of the rural infidels and discuss the conclusions drawn.

III

THE DEPLETED COUNTRY CHURCH

THAT the rural church, as an institution, is to-day in a state of depletion or decadence can not be longer doubted by any one who has made an extensive first-hand study of the situation. Not only do the extensive survey studies of the Presbyterian Department of Church and Country Life, under the direction of Dr. Warren H. Wilson, amply justify this assertion, but the long-term experience of hundreds of rural ministers in many denominations bears abundant testimony of the fact. It must be remembered, however, that this decadence is only an incident in an evolutionary social process.

The nature of the church should be briefly explained in order that this discussion may be better understood. The church is a divine institution, but humanly organized. The divine conception of the church is perfect—that can not become antiquated; neither does it depend solely nor absolutely upon temporal

equipments to carry forward its great purposes in realizing the salvation of the race. During the weakest days of Christianity, from the standpoint of physical equipments, the church was most virile and militant. Other things equal, however, it is reasonable to believe that the church will be efficient in the direct ratio to her physical equipment, up to certain economic limitations. The rural church, therefore, has an element, not possessed by the other rural institutions, that must be taken into account—the divine factor.

The organization of the church, on the other hand, is human, and, therefore, imperfect. As a matter of fact, its methods and appointments become antiquated from time to time. The past generation organized the church in accordance with its best notions for carrying out the will of God among men; but notions are dynamic, not static, and this generation will have a slightly, or perhaps a vastly, different notion of God's purpose, and will, therefore, alter the human organization of the church in order more effectively to carry out the new idea. The next generation will likewise institute further changes. Each new generation and age brings its new conditions, its new ideals, and its new oppor-

tunities and responsibilities in religion; and the Christian church must ever reorganize to meet these new things. The Sunday school, young people's organizations, the Cradle Roll, the ladies' aid, the Brotherhood, etc., are all new forms of church organization that have been instituted to meet the new conditions of a new age.

This generation is living in a new age; we have helped to make it, and it is ours. Our institutions change with our conditions. Before, and sometime after the Civil War, many of the railroads of this country were of the narrow-gauge type. The rails of the tracks were only about three feet apart, and the locomotives and cars were constructed accordingly. One of these narrow-gauge systems, with its dinky cars, is to-day a curiosity. This old-time system was adequate to the needs of that generation. But a new commercial age came shortly after the Civil War. The narrow-gauge system was entirely inadequate to the needs of this new age of commerce. Larger cars and greater locomotives were needed to transport the tons and tons of trade commodities, and gradually the new standard-gauge system, with its wider tracks of 4 feet 8 1-2 inches, replaced

the old. A new commercial age demanded a new railroad system.

Likewise, a new social age demands new institutions, or readjustments of the old. The rural church, as organized and equipped to serve a generation in the early eighteenth century, can not meet the needs of a twentieth-century civilization. A middle-nineteenth-century locomotive can not be successfully run on a twentieth-century track. The country has too many narrow-gauge churches.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. How do we know that the rural church is in a state of evolution?

2. Explain the dual nature of the church. What is said of the divine conception of the church?

3. What is said of the human factor in the church? Why does it become necessary to reorganize the church facilities from time to time?

4. What is the significance of the last sentence of this chapter?

IV

THE CITY DWELLER AND THE COUNTRY CHURCH

RECENT shifts in the habitat and occupations of a large percentage of our people have gradually brought serious problems to our country communities. The drift, in many sections, of large numbers of the country people to the cities, as permanent places of abode and activity, has, in a large number of instances, more than decimated the membership bodies of the various rural institutions. One of these institutions thus depleted of its manhood and womanhood is the country church.

This one remarkable instance of rural depopulation is given as a fairly typical example. During the past three decades, Vinton County, a rural county in southern Ohio, has lost 25 per cent. of its inhabitants. In 1880 its population was 17,223, but in 1910 this number had decreased to 13,096. The omnivorous maws of the

cities—Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton—and the West, have swallowed up a large part of the best life of the communities in this county.

This migration from the rural districts to the cities of the nation, and especially to the young and rapidly growing cities of the Middle West, has taken place within this present generation. This fact needs to be emphasized, since it serves to make one realize that the great rural problems of to-day have come upon us suddenly. Two recent actual occurrences will serve to make this fact more vivid.

Dr. C. B. Taylor, a minister of Vinton County, was recently invited to preach in a Columbus (O.) pulpit. The announcement was duly made in regular form in the newspapers of the city. When the Doctor arose to preach on that Sunday morning, he looked out into the faces—not of strangers, but of his friends and recent neighbors. A very large percentage of the congregation was made up of former members of the various charges that he had served in his old home communities in southern Ohio. His country fields had thus suddenly been transmuted into a city charge.

The writer recently gave an address before a Brotherhood of a city church on the subject standing at the head of this chapter. Two-thirds of the members of that group of men were at one time residents of either the open country or of villages of less than one thousand inhabitants. Only ten of them were born and reared in the city.

Not only do these instances serve to show how recently this rural depletion has been going on, but also how those people who "used to" live in the country—over fifteen or twenty years ago—do not in reality know rural conditions as they actually exist to-day, unless they have kept in close touch with rural life and movements. The "used-to-be's" of only a few years ago are by no means the *are's* of to-day. This fact is one of the first of which the city man, who moved from the country some ten, twenty or thirty years ago, needs to take cognizance.

The depopulation of the rural districts has been the making of the city dweller's success and fortune. It brought a constant stream of young, fresh, pure and ambitious blood for the shops, the stores, the factories, the schools and the churches; and the cities of the entire country are still vibrant as a

result of this energy of the hale and hardy sons and daughters from the soil. Building has been ever on the increase, the factories have been running overtime, business has boomed, and greater opportunities of every sort have been developed. The young storekeeper who, some twenty years ago, went to the city, is to-day a wealthy city merchant; the blacksmith, the owner and manager of a garage or factory; the village carpenter, a contractor; the huckster, a commission merchant; the schoolteacher, a superintendent or principal.

The truth of these statements is so commonly accepted that details are unnecessary. However, it may not be regarded as superfluous to give the results of two city surveys, for the purpose of emphasis.

In 1907, Dr. F. T. Keeney, of Syracuse, N. Y., conducted an inquiry among the business men of South Salina Street, the principal thoroughfare of his city, and found that 67 per cent. of these gentlemen were born in the country. Furthermore, 81 per cent. of the down-town doctors canvassed were country born. The chancellor of Syracuse University, all the deans save one, and 77 per cent. of all the professors, were once country boys.

A more recent (1916) survey of High Street, the principal business section of Columbus, O., showed that, of the 129 most representative business men, sixty-five, or slightly more than 50 per cent., came from the country.

Not only has the cityward trend of the rural population depleted the country districts of people, but of all other human interests, in about the same ratio. The wealthy landowner who went to the city is now an absentee landlord. The profits of his farm go to the city where he makes his investments and where he spends his money. The country is to that extent economically impoverished. He took his family with him, and its removal has had a depressing effect upon the social life of the community. The educational, the business, the civic and the religious affairs have similarly suffered; and so the country church has come in for its share of devastation. Thus is the country exploited for the city!

Twenty, thirty or forty years ago, the country people created, by dint of hard labor and economy, institutional facilities for the needs of all. Everybody assisted in the upkeep of the rural institutions, including the

church. But these same institutions, once sufficient for and supported by 50 per cent. more people than now, are a burden to those who remain in the country. The equilibrium of needs and support has been radically disturbed by a social shift that has resulted—socially, economically and educationally—to the advantage of those who migrated to the city, but less advantageously to those who have remained in the country.

The newly made city man, therefore, has been a vital factor in the unmaking of the country church, though he may not be conscious of it as he worships in his stately city church, while his friends and former neighbors struggle along in the country at the old home church.

All our lives we have heard about the great social problems of the cities; and the congestions caused by people coming from the rural districts have given rise to or emphasized many of them. Appeals for help to remedy these urban conditions have been made to all classes of our people—to the city dwellers as well as to the country people. Appeals of peculiar force in the name of philanthropy, patriotism, duty to fellow-man, and Christian charity, have found ready re-

sponse among rural people, and thousands of dollars have been contributed yearly by the farmers of our land to be devoted to the amelioration of the hard conditions of life in our civic centers.

But to-day the rural districts and small towns have awakened to the fact of social distress. The problems are everywhere becoming acute and in many places they are beyond solution. The Macedonian cry for help used to come from the cities alone, now it comes from the country. Men of the cities, will you come over and help us? At least, pay back what you owe!

From the foregoing, the duty of the city dweller who has prospered through his enlarged opportunities, and, in most cases, either directly or indirectly from rural resources, would seem clear. Did any rural community give him a good start in life financially, educationally, politically, morally—then he owes that rural community something, if for no other reason than for gratitude. The probabilities are that thousands of city people, if this truth were brought home to them in full force, would respond very quickly. Others, of course, would regard their duty in this relation, as in others, with contempt.

A Rural Church that Has Been the Recipient of the Beneficence of a City Man for Over Twenty Years.

Under the leadership of that superb gentleman of the Kingdom, Dr. N. W. Stroup, the Cleveland District in the East Ohio Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church

formed a Country Church Commission, which had for its purpose the encouraging of discouraged leaders, and especially the supplementing of the financial resources of the weaker rural charges immediately around the city of Cleveland. On the "Forward Movement Day" the city congregations were told about the struggling churches near the old homesteads that had suffered so many departures. The remembrance had its message and a ministry. The wealthy city churches responded so well that the salaries of every minister in the district were raised to a minimum living wage, and in a short time the efforts of the commission were felt through a betterment of social conditions and the salvation of souls.[1]

In 1872 the rather wealthy membership of a certain denomination, in a small country town of scarcely two hundred population in Ohio, erected a very pretentious building for the community it was intended to serve. During the following decade or two many of the original founders either died or moved away. One of the wealthiest of these, Mr. James

[1]A fuller account of the work of this commission, by Dr. Stroup himself, may be found in the author's "Solving the Country Church Problem," pp. 95-97 and 161-163.

Nelson by name, moved to Columbus, O. Some years later, the maintenance and improvements of the church building seemed to become a burden to this community of arrested development in which it stood. Mr. Nelson, though he had moved away permanently, never lost his interest in the "old home church." Forty years after it was built, this city man of the country contributed liberally of his wealth for needed improvements of the place of worship of his younger days.

The Woolworth Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, at Great Bend, N. Y., affords a striking example of a city man's beneficence to the rural community of his youth. The picture on the next page shows the commodious building of beautiful colonial design, together with the new parsonage and the grounds. Both church and parsonage are completely furnished with modern equipments. There are separate entrances to the auditorium and the Sunday-school room, though they have interior connections. In the basement are the dining-room, the kitchen and the cloak-rooms. The illumination is by electricity. At the rear of the church is a tennis-court for the use of the minister and

the young people of the community. A barn, also, has been built on the premises.

This rural church plant is the gift of Mr. Frank W. Woolworth, head of the five and ten cent store syndicate, as a memorial to his

THE WOOLWORTH MEMORIAL CHURCH.
A City Man's Contribution to the Enrichment of Country Life.

father and mother. The property is worth $30,000. The donor has also endowed the church with $20,000 in five per cent. bonds.

Contrast these with another instance. In a certain community in the Western Reserve

(O.), a very wealthy woman, who lives in New York City, owns a large farm. A tenant operates the place. Once a year, for a period of about two weeks, the owner visits this old home farm, and then returns to the city again where her life interests center. The proceeds of the farm are sent to her in the city, where they are spent in maintaining a great living establishment and retinue of servants. The rural community church back in Ohio, within sight of the farm, is barely meeting its financial obligations year after year. The tenant on this farm is not able to contribute much to the support of this church, while the owner contributes nothing. The church serves this farm. Its land is enhanced in price because of its presence. The moral influence it exerts keeps the tenant honest and true. If the church were not there, the tenant would probably not remain on that farm, and it would be more difficult to get another one who would stay and be satisfactory. The circumstance is a shame and an insult—and there are thousands of others similar to it. The soil will support its church if permitted.

The city dweller ought to be interested in the success and support of the country church

for another reason. He should regard his obligation to the rural church as a civic duty. Many of his fellow-citizens are young people coming from the rural districts. If the fountainhead of moral teaching should fail in its ministry to these in the country, then the city might expect an increase of crimes from these newcomers. The facts are far from that now, thank God, and may the young people ever uphold the reputation which their predecessors have given as an inheritance to the country youth! These young people from the country are going to become the employees of the city man of affairs and he will want them to be well trained in truth, honesty, faithfulness, and other Christian virtues, long before they come to him. Only a virile rural church will insure this training.

Again, this same city man will have dealings with farmers, and he is interested in their honesty too. The instances might be further multiplied, but let it all be summed up by saying that the city should be very deeply concerned about the moral, the social, the intellectual and the economic welfare of the country—and at the head of the list we place the *moral.*

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Show how the movement of population has affected the rural church. Give examples.

2. What are the "used-to-be's" and the *are's*?

3. How has the rural depopulation contributed to the upbuilding of the city? to the depletion of the country?

4. Show why the city dweller owes an obligation to the country church.

5. What are some of the things that a country church commission could do for your district or community?

6. What do you think of the actions of James Nelson and Frank Woolworth?

7. What do you think of the action of the absentee landlady toward the rural church in Ohio?

8. Mention several reasons why the city man ought to be interested in the welfare of the country church.

V

PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND FACTORS IN THEIR SOLUTION

THE problems of the country church, as of any other social institution, are legion. There are, however, a few great problems which are more or less general among all struggling country churches, and these must be solved before any permanent progress may be made. It is to a discussion of these outstanding problems of country churches in general, and to a consideration of the most feasible and logical methods of solution, that this chapter is devoted.

A small membership is the one great outstanding weakness of about 50 per cent of the rural churches. The increasing of the membership is the one basic problem to be solved first. While there are no complete data at hand, yet, judging from the results of the surveys already made by the Department of Church and Country Life of the Presbyterian Church, it is quite safe to say that about 33

per cent. of the rural churches of America have a membership of less than fifty persons.

Inadequate financial support comes, sooner or later, as a result of smallness of membership. Suppose, for example, we assume a church has fifty members. At least 20 per cent. of this number are practically non-contributors toward the financial support of the church, leaving forty persons to bear the expenses. An average contribution of ten dollars annually from each of these forty members would, in the average rural community, be considered an excellent showing. This means, then, that the minister's salary, the care, repair and equipment of the church building and grounds, together with the insurance premium on the building and other miscellaneous expenses, would have to be sustained on a total budget of four hundred dollars a year. This is wholly inadequate, even if the whole amount should go to paying the minister's salary; for, if he has an average-sized family of five, it can not be properly supported on less than eight hundred dollars a year, besides providing a house. From this estimate, it will be seen that even two small country churches, each having less than fifty members, are still too small to financial-

ly support a good minister, while a good preacher can serve a larger number of persons than the families represented by a membership of one hundred. It is deemed inadvisable, therefore, to encourage a country church to maintain a separate existence that can not possibly raise its membership to one hundred. To do so only gives rise to additional problems which are almost universally found in connection with the weaker rural churches.

We see, therefore, that the solving of the problem of financial support depends upon the solution of the problem of membership, which is basic. This is the logical order of attack, and is in harmony with the policy and the intention under which every rural church must originally have been organized. At some time, under the inspiration of a religious impulse and the guidance of a leader, a group of people had decided to band themselves together into a church society, and, although their number was not great then, they had every reason to expect that, in time, there would be additions. In many, many cases the new country churches grew to be self-supporting and strong, and then, with the great rural exodus, have again become

small in membership. So, to-day, we have thousands of weak country churches in the rural districts, courageously struggling for an existence, tenaciously holding out almost against hope from year to year, hoping and praying that some day the promised vision of increase and strength may yet come. It is true that many have struggled and succeeded; hundreds have dissolved; thousands are to-day patiently and anxiously awaiting the helping hand. In a large percentage of these instances, if help of the proper kind comes in time, self-supporting societies will be built up and maintained; but if help does not come soon, hundreds will, in the next few years, close their doors forever. We are now passing through a critical time in the history of country churches—it is an age of transition from the old to the new rural life. The great religious organizations can not move too rapidly in the performance of their duty to rural America.

Let it not be inferred, from the foregoing, that every struggling country church may expect to be built up to a self-supporting basis. Hundreds do not deserve it, and it will be for the good of the next generation of country people for them to die. Nor is it ad-

visable at once to abandon every church with a membership of less than one hundred, or of only fifty, especially where they are attached to other churches for administrative purposes or where there seems a possibility in a few years of building up a self-supporting society.

Social inefficiency is another shortcoming that grows out of the problems of membership and financial support. A small membership can not well reach the lives of the people of a community, because it is not sufficiently diffused among them, and exerts a comparatively small portion of the total life motive force of the countryside; while, being crippled with financial stringency, it can not hope to secure adequate modern physical equipments to be used as a vehicle with which to render a Christian social service to a modern agricultural people. The chief factor in the solution of the problem of social efficiency, it will thus be seen, lies in the answer to the problem of membership.

Beginning with the basic problem of membership, we can readily see, without further analysis, how many secondary problems arise from it, as the financial problem, the social-service problem, the problem of adequate

leadership among the membership itself, etc. It is also seen that out of these secondary problems grow other problems which might be called tertiary; as, for example, inadequate and insufficient equipments, unsuitable buildings, inferior supplies, etc., which are the inevitable results of lack of financial support. Sunday baseball, cigarette smoking, hilariousness and rudeness among the young people—all these develop from conditions that obtain in a rural community where the church is not socialized and fails to do its duty in conserving the moral boy and girl life in the country.

Method of Attack.

The method of attack in solving the fundamental problem of membership does not, in my judgment, lie in the abandonment of all weak country churches. If abandonment is made for the purpose of consolidation of membership with another church or churches, well and good, providing the local conditions make consolidation advisable. Consolidation of churches, therefore, implies the abandonment of some. Whenever possible and advisable, churches of the same denomination in a community ten miles square—more or

less—should consolidate; and the same is true of churches of different denominations. Where moderately good roads are found, a country church may, with proper organization and leadership, serve a community of ten miles square with a population of five thousand quite as effectively as was possible for a rural church a generation ago to serve a community five miles square with only five hundred people.

Spiritual evangelization is the logical remedy for increasing the church membership in rural communities that are not already overchurched. Evangelistic campaigns in a rural community, properly and effectively conducted, are capable of doubling the membership of three-fourths of the country churches throughout the United States. This possibility has many times been pointed out in recent years, for, in the average community in the rural districts, often less than 50 per cent. of the population is in any way connected with any church.[1]

But who will carry on these campaigns to enlist in the great army of Christ the

[1]The reader is referred to the findings of Rev. Albert Z. Mann, who presents the results of his survey of a typical rural community in Indiana, in the author's "Solving the Country Church Problem," pp. 289-291. The Methodist Book Concern, New York City.

farmer who makes no profession of Christianity? The average rural preacher is not properly qualified for the task: first, because he usually has two or three charges to look after, and, therefore, more than he can properly do; and, second, because he is not trained for the work of evangelization among rural people, agriculturally speaking. A new type of professional evangelist must be found to preach Jesus Christ in rural America in terms of the farmers' experiences.[1] A more effective method of preparation for the evangelistic efforts in rural communities will have to be developed. The one-day-single-purpose survey is full of promise for this purpose.

The rural evangelist, after he had completed his work, necessarily would have to be followed up with a minister who had been trained for the rural ministry, so that he could not only preach the gospel in terms of country life, but could organize his church for rural social service. In other words, the rural church, on being increased in membership, must at once be led into the paths of the new country life by a new rural minister

[1]For practical suggestions of methods in teaching religious truths in terms of farm life, see Chapter VII. of the author's "Solving the Country Church Problem." The Methodist Book Concern, Cincinnati, O.

who knows the ideas, understands the ideals, and sees the vision of the new ruralism. To leave the revivified country church in charge of a minister of the conventional type, as we now know him, will only mean a gradual decline in membership, and a dejected disappointment for both community and church. Unless the Lord's harvest is garnered and kept by master men, much of the precious grain will be wasted.

It must be recognized, however, that the new type of rural evangelist that has been spoken of—and he has probably not yet appeared—is only the suggestion of a temporary expedient. It is the rurally trained minister who will eventually build up a moral rural America of permanent value. However, the evangelism must come, for no Christian rural civilization can long endure with half of the population in paganism.

Who will pay the bill for this militant, progressive, forward movement in the country? This is the crucial question, for the rural districts now are either unable or unwilling to pay. We are forced to the conclusion, therefore—other expressed opinions for purposes of flattery notwithstanding—that the rural districts in the United States

of America, the greatest Christian nation on earth, are among the most promising missionary fields in the world. It is properly regarded as an enterprise of the home missionary boards of the large church organizations. The large church bodies will need to come to the rescue by furnishing funds and workers. It is here that the departments of church and country life of the various denominations will find their greatest service. They will prepare the way for the growth of the individual rural churches, either by well-trained young preachers of the new rural type, or by rural evangelists of the new type, or by both.

The Christian colleges and universities should have a large share in blazing the way and in training the moral leaders for the rural communities. Every church school in America, of collegiate grade, should have at least a rural department with an extension service, and there is every reason to believe that there is room for a half-dozen first-class colleges of agriculture in connection with the larger and more wealthy Christian universities. But this is another story. However, it is properly a large factor in the solution of the country church problem, and the Chris-

tian colleges whose administrations catch the vision of rural service first, and act upon it, may expect a double blessing—one from the Lord and one from the people served.

Let it be remembered, therefore, that when the rural churches shall have been strengthened in membership, the great problem is only half solved. To possess the land is only the initial step in conquest; it must then be cultivated and improved. The new rural church must be rurally socialized, must have a spiritual vision for its country flock, must possess adequate physical equipment, must teach in terms of farm experience, and, most important of all, it must be supplied with a specially trained ministry. The country church must furnish the moral dynamic to community progress. If the church does not furnish this, there will be little or no progress toward a better and more satisfying *life* in the country.

There are other problems of the country church, to be sure, but they are similar in connection with all churches whether located in the country, the village or the city. The problems here discussed are the chief distinctively rural ones of the present-day country church.

The progress of the community depends upon the elevation of the individual lives of the rural folks; but the farmer can not lift himself morally and spiritually any more than can any one else. This, Christ alone can do. Hence, true and permanent development in the life of the country depends, in the last analysis, upon a Christian people on the soil of America.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Why is the membership problem of first importance?
2. Show how the financial problem is dependent upon the problem of membership.
3. What should be the minimum membership of any country church? Why?
4. When would you recommend the abandonment of a rural church?
5. Show how the social efficiency of a church is dependent upon its membership.
6. What is meant by "secondary" and "tertiary" problems? Illustrate.
7. How large an area may a rural church serve?
8. What is the method of attack recommended?
9. What of rural evangelization?

10. What is said about the rurally trained minister?

11. Who will pay the bill for rehabilitating the rural churches of America?

12. What share may Christian colleges have in the rural work? What is your local denominational college doing in connection with this work?

13. After the rural church has been reclaimed, what must then be done?

14. What is the condition for a Christian rural America?

VI

RURAL LEADERSHIP

MANY people have a false conception of what a leader is, especially a rural leader. The idea that he is to be "It" and always to be in the forefront of every community activity, is quite wrong. The person who goes to a community of farmers with the intention of showing them in an aggressive manner "how to do it," and endeavors to "put one over on them," is doomed to failure as a rural leader. It is not by aggressiveness and fight that victories are won in the rural world. If this method is attempted, it will be found to one's sorrow that the farmer himself is also somewhat of a fighter.

The Rural Leader Defined.

The rural social leader is the connecting link between what the community is and what it might be. Without seeming to lead, he succeeds in having the people of the community do the things he plans. It is by direction,

suggestion, inspiration, stimulation, persuasion and patient and persistent industry that rural victories are won. The function of leadership must be humbly performed, for the exploiter almost always comes to grief. The leader is always open to suggestion, even from the most unpromising sources. He must tenaciously and courageously stay on the job. Vicissitudes mean nothing to him, except the necessity of making adaptations to them. His one fundamental aim in life is to help the community and all the individuals that compose it. His personality is unassuming; his character, unselfish; but his work, effective.

Herein lies the tragedy of true rural leadership. Some person catches the vision of what ought to be. The program is wrought out in the quiet and secluded corners of his soul. Years, perhaps, are spent in patient endeavor to open a rift through the befogged community spirit. Finally the light enters, the community life moves on and upward to the goal set for it, while the author of the program may not only be unhonored, but even unrecognized. Some one else, even, may get the credit for accomplishing the great task. The true rural social worker needs a sweet and sunny disposition that can genuine-

ly smile because of the progress of others, and a soul that can truly rejoice in the hidden recesses of its own unselfish life. Even the foreign missionary has loyal and admiring followers, and occasionally becomes the popular hero among the converted heathen; but the rural "home missionary" may never feel the exhilaration that comes from being popular.

This means that the rural preacher, if he would be a rural leader, must make sacrifices and undergo hardships quietly and uncomplainingly. By his devotion must the rural preacher ingratiate himself with his people. He must be able to feel amply rewarded in the accomplishment of things that are too often unnoticed and disregarded by society in this great commercial age in which we live. It is by means of these little things, however, that the preacher may find a convenient entrance into the heart and life of the community that he would capture.

The Open Door.

The path that leads into the homes of the average rural community begins inside the church door, or the door of the parsonage. Hit that trail. Does the young farmer, who

is endeavoring to establish himself, need encouragement? Do any parishioners need a job? Does the deaf-mute in the country need to have the gospel preached to him? Do the children need direction in their play-life? Do the people need to have created within themselves a taste for good literature? Are good roads needed? Does the rural teacher of the community need friendly co-operation? Are the farmers suffering from the use of antiquated methods of farming? Is an agricultural extension school or farmers' institute needed in the community? Do the farmers need to be organized for co-operative buying and selling? Does the community need to be educated in the matter of sanitation? All these things and many others are signals for advance for the preacher who has eyes to see and a willing heart to do.

The writer knows of a rural minister who had a few deaf-mutes in his congregations. They came to church occasionally, but never had they heard a sermon. Here was his opportunity, and he saw and recognized it. Furthermore, he had the disposition to pay the price of reaching these individuals in the several communities that he served for his Master. He learned the sign language of the

deaf-mutes. After that, he devoted a part of his sermon time to singing a song and preaching a sermonette especially for the deaf-mutes in the congregation. Everybody approved the idea. This was his community trail. To-day, besides preaching to his rural congregations, this preacher voluntarily acts as a missionary to the deaf-mutes in his State, and he has traveled hundreds of miles to preach to groups of these unfortunates.

One of the livest rural brotherhoods known to the writer takes the keenest interest in the agricultural life of the community. Practically every man of the countryside is eligible to membership, whether he is a church-member or not. Boys of sixteen meet with men of sixty to consider the common welfare of the community, and the bi-weekly meetings are always well attended, by young and old, by saint and sinner. The preacher is only a member; the presiding officer and leader is a layman, a farmer, a real prince among men. But the preacher is not a figure-head; though he keeps himself in the background, his suggestions, wisdom and spirit dominate the man-life of the community.

These ideas are fundamental to the successful rural-life leader. Plant them as seeds

into your life, water them with sacrifice, cultivate them with your thoughts, let them blossom forth in your actions, and the harvest will be garnered in heaven, and you, yourself, shall be the enriched husbandman.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Describe the rural leader.
2. What is the method of his leadership?
3. What are some of the avenues for entering the place of leadership in your community?
4. Are you ready and willing to answer the call of the "still small voice" of the community? How? When? Where?

VII

THE MINISTER AS A RURAL LEADER

MUCH has been said and written about the rural teacher as a leader; more ought to be said concerning the rural minister as a leader of country people. The probabilities are that the rural minister will eventually do more towards the solving of the fundamental problems of the country districts than any other public servant.

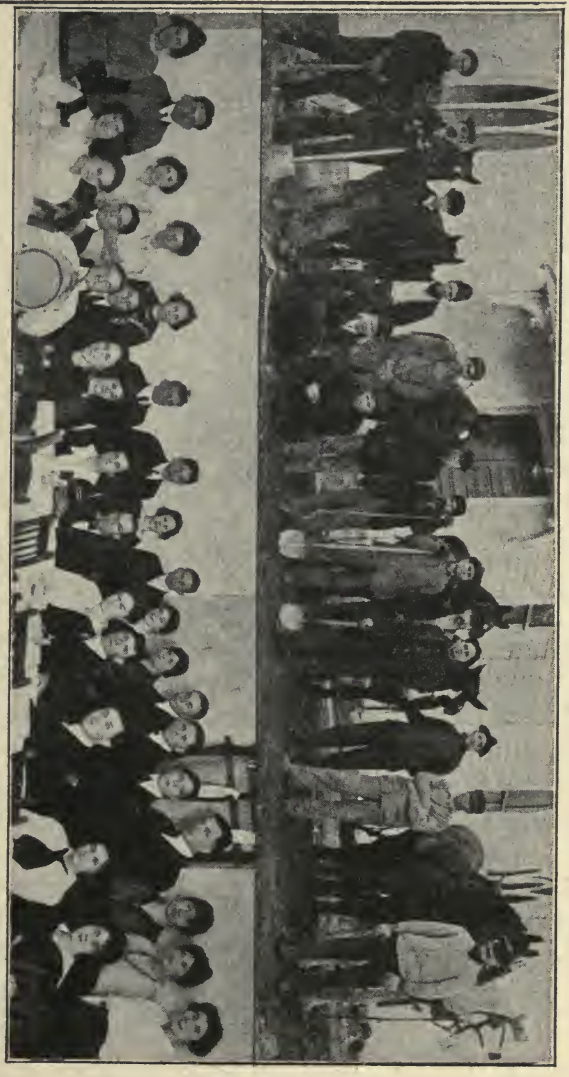
The status of the rural teacher presents three very serious deficiencies which seriously handicap her in assuming the function of leader among country people. First, a large majority of the rural teachers of America are young women, often immature girls, whose social experience is limited, whose education is quite restricted, and whose insight into rural problems is entirely inadequate. These qualities of youth, still subject to development, can not command the confidence necessary for enlisting the discipleship of an agricultural people in any serious program that

may be projected and championed by such a leader.

The second shortcoming of the rural schoolteacher in the matter of leadership is fastened upon her by her work. She deals almost wholly with children, with immature minds, with the embryonic forces of the community. The rural leader must be a present power, and deal with the developed forces, the adults of his generation. So fully are the rural teacher's energies and attention taken up with the ministry to the child life, that a large majority of teachers come to think in terms of the child mind, and their very actions are often prompted by childlike motives. It is only the occasional teacher who rises above the child level and becomes a power great enough to mold community sentiment, ideals and activities. As a teacher, she may be a leader in training. The person in charge of a traction engine, though possibly an engineer in the making, can not qualify to run a twentieth-century locomotive. The rural social engineer will not only need to qualify for his task, but he must be absorbed with its actual duties and deal with the active forces that move the community life, prompt its policies and secure its achievements.

REV. C. M. McCONNELL.

The Country Preacher Is a Leader of the Whole Community—Old and Young.



ABOVE—Group of Farmers Excavating the Basement of a Rural Church for a Social Center Room. All Volunteer Labor.

BELOW—A Class Social Held in a Hall Rented by the Church in a Rural Community.

Young women are apt to get married. About one-sixth of the rural schoolteachers of the nation leave the profession each year, and a large percentage of them are removed by way of matrimony. One desirable thing in rural leadership is permanency; and this, then, constitutes the third count against rural teachers as community leaders.

In the foregoing discussion the village school principal, and the district and the county superintendent, have not been considered. Some of the foregoing considerations, however, will often apply to these also.

The rural minister, in contrast to the unfavorable circumstances attaching to the rural teacher, is usually a man of maturer years, and with broader experience with the life and affairs of matured men and women. He is usually "called," and hence is in the ministry to stay; and, while he may be moved from a community, his successor is usually a man of the same type. In these two respects—maturity and permanency—he is far better qualified to lead than the rural teacher. In the third respect, the rural minister deals almost wholly with adults, though the institution through which he labors may reach every person in the community, both old and young.

THE MINISTER AS A RURAL LEADER

Being a minister is almost synonymous with being a leader. He is sent to call sinners to repentance. He leads his people—young and old—to live better lives. His work involves contact with the units of society and with the social structure as an organization of individuals. His work with the individual life is fundamental. He organizes the whole countryside for the welfare of all its individuals in general, and for certain groups of individuals in particular. The economic, the social, the recreational, the industrial, the educational and the civic life—in fact, every phase of human life in the country—is called upon to contribute to the great community forward movement—when a rural minister of the right sort is placed in charge of the church in the country.

Furthermore, the rural minister has a religious basis for his leadership which compels with moral authority. The fundamental leadership must be moral: it furnishes the dynamic that compels the upward trend in social life, and through this ministry every agency of every sort may be consecrated to the benefit of human life. The results obtained on any other basis must be insecure. The economic, the educational, the social, the scien-

tific, the modern—all are only sand when the moral principle is left out.

The ground of the farmer may bring forth plentifully and he may reason within himself, saying: "What shall I do, for I do not have sufficient storage room for all my products? This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater ones, and in them I will have room enough for all my crops. Then I will say to myself, 'See what an abundance of wealth I have—enough to satisfy my every need and luxury for many years. Therefore, I will take my ease, and eat, drink, and be merry.' " This is the final result of a merely prosperous agriculture. But the preacher will here become the moral reminder. He will say: "You fool! you may die in a day and your wealth will be no longer yours. What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Thus may the minister set an eternal principle against a fact of life, and the latter must be acknowledged as being subordinate to the former.

The preacher must enforce right standards through his Christian principles. On the basis of dollars and cents, a boy, during the first ten years of his life, is not worth as

much to the farmer as a good dairy cow. The child is a constant source of expense—he must be fed, clothed, sheltered, cared for, educated—and gives back very little by way of financial earnings. Many a farmer does not hesitate to put eight hundred dollars into a registered cow, but grumbles when asked or required to invest eighty dollars in the boy. Is this standard ever met with among rural people? If it is, it is not a true one and must be corrected. The minister is the only agent who may compel the fundamental correction.

Only the rural reorganization that is built on the rock of the fundamental moralities will stand. Agricultural practices without a moral responsibility must eventually fail as the result of their own sins. Right and wrong practices in agriculture will some day be measured, not by the scientific standard alone, but by the moral, which will also determine the validity of the scientific. Rural America is beginning to look toward the new and true rural minister as the master builder; for the system which he represents must eventually become recognized as fundamental in the agricultural life of any people.

The intellectual leadership, as well as the moral leadership, of the rural community ought, by common consent, to be vested in the rural minister. He is one of the keenest thinkers of the country, and no one studies and reads more than he should. He is everywhere recognized as one of the "big four" of every rural community—the preacher, the doctor, the school superintendent and the college farmer.

The minister's acquaintance in the community gives him a wonderful opportunity to assume the function of leader. Through his pastoral calls, and otherwise, he comes to know individuals and families as no other man can know them, save the country doctor; and by his religious mission to the people he is in a position to lead and influence them.

A man's religious experience is a very practical matter. It extends to all the various functions and relationships of life—to the moral, the educational, the economic, the industrial. Financial conditions are more often the result of religious experience than is commonly supposed. Many enterprises have been swung financially as the result of the religious experience in the lives of men. Industrial problems are likewise subject to this

subtle influence. There is no reason why a better and saner agriculture and rural social life may not be brought about by the same influence. In fact, it is the accomplishment of this service in the lives of men that makes the minister and his church the helpful servants of the community. It is a sad day for the countryside when it is charitably said, "The community keeps up the church." But when the community receives its inspiration and its leadership from the church and its pastor, then we may expect an activity with an upward and constructive trend.

The rural minister differs from his colleagues chiefly in his *attitude* towards, and *understanding* of, rural affairs and country people. He must know what the new ruralism is and catch its meaning. He must be of the rural mind, and, especially, he must know how to deal with it. He must understand the rural problem in general and the peculiar problems of his own church in particular, and have a working philosophy along the broad lines of which he expects to work out their solutions. He must appreciate the opportunities offered by the rural districts. He must know agriculture, appreciate and understand his people, and above all, and correlat-

ing all, he must be a religious light, preaching the gospel truth in terms of rural thought.

The opportunity of the live rural minister is beyond calculation. His standing in the community, his profession, his education, his experience and training, are all designed to fit him for leadership. If he lacks the rural vision and agricultural knowledge, he is, of course, hopeless; but he who will earnestly seek to qualify in these great essentials of rural leadership may be a Moses to his people, a master among strong men and a true servant of God.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. What are the deficiencies of rural teachers as rural leaders?
2. Discuss these deficiencies.
3. Contrast the status of the rural preacher with that of the rural teacher in reference to the capacity for leadership.
4. How does the minister's calling especially fit him for leadership?
5. Illustrate the force of the moral principle in the rural minister's leadership.
6. Is successful agriculture dependent upon moral principles?

7. Who are the rural "big four"?

8. How is a man's religious experience related to his every-day life?

9. Do you know of a rural minister who does not have the right attitude to, and proper understanding of, rural affairs? Help him.

VIII

THE RURAL DEACONESS

A NEW sphere of activity is opening for the deaconess who has a vision of rural religious possibilities, coupled with rural experience and the right kind of religious training. This new sphere is the rural. As usual, the field is large, but the workers are few. Let it be said at the start, too, that the training which deaconesses receive for the city work will, in the vast majority of cases, have to be supplemented with a specific training for the rural field. Young women born and bred in the country will be the most desirable candidates for this new work.

The deaconess workers in real rural communities are few, but those few have secured results so satisfactory that the church should take note of their achievements, because of the great possibilities demonstrated. The opportunities of the rural field for deaconess work may best be shown by citing an actual instance.

Miss Alice Elizabeth Foster, a deaconess in the State of Vermont, who has been spending some years on the rural field, says: "The salvation of the rural community is the church with a vision." That sounds like a prophecy in rural religion. Another of her observations runs like this: "What we need in our country towns is leadership," and goes on to explain: "If it isn't found in the church, it will be elsewhere, and we who labor in the small places know how demoralizing, in most instances, this leadership is."

Miss Foster's experience was first gained in a country community fifteen miles from any railroad. There were two Protestant churches represented, and her church was the weaker. Her first congregation was a small one—twelve in number. The attendance, however, increased, and before she left, there was a new and deeper interest in church affairs. The chief thing that she did to arouse the people was to call among them. Being new in the rural work, she says that she felt very keenly the lack of preparation. She said: "I naturally spent a great deal of time on sermons, but was as conscientious about using my afternoons for calls as I was

the mornings for study. My hold on the people at Blank was due wholly to the fact that I love folks. I entered sympathetically into their lives."

Another Experience.

It was well for this young woman that she loves folks, for there were, at the next place she went to, a large number of very rough people. The leaders in the church were opposed to her being there, for no other reason than because she was a woman. However, the church was opened, the cellar walls calcimined, chairs varnished, and a new stove purchased. During the year she had several entertainments, where the direct object was to provide for the social life of the people. The church suppers that were formerly held in the church room were now held elsewhere, and in these the new deaconess took an interest, not because it meant money, but because this was the sort of thing the people had been accustomed to doing, and were loath to give it up.

After a time, the people began to appreciate the efforts of this young woman. The audiences grew, people came out to everything that went on, and especially when there

were special occasions in which the children had things to do.

A Larger Field.

Later, Miss Foster was called to a beautiful Vermont community in full view of the White Mountains. The main church is an historic one, formerly one of the leading societies of the section, but now there is only a handful of folks trying to hold together. There is an "out appointment," even smaller in the number of people represented, but, perhaps, the more interesting one. Here are several young farmers with growing families. The farms are well kept, barns and houses painted, etc. There is nothing specially being done for the social life of these people. Ah! that is the rub of country life in America today.

A survey of the community revealed the fact that nearly all of these farmers have had a high-school education, and that all the young people of high-school age are now attending high schools. The deaconess sums up the situation by saying: "There is here a splendid opportunity to do work that will count for the kingdom, and for a strong community."

The rural deaconess is at present an almost absent factor sorely needed in country life. Farm women and girls need this feminine influence of a helpful and sacrificing Christian church worker. By enlarging the rural charges by consolidation, or otherwise, and organizing them into what Dr. Edwin L. Earp calls the "social-center parish plan,"[1] thousands of rural communities may come to have the rural deaconess in their midst as the helpful complement of the rural preacher in a countryside ministry.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. What is a deaconess?
2. What are some of the things that rural deaconesses might do?
3. Why should country people be prejudiced on the rural deaconess idea?
4. What should the special training of the rural deaconess consist of?
5. Could a rural deaconess render enough helpful service in your community to justify her presence? If so, how?
6. What is Dr. Earp's "social-center parish plan"?

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[1]See Chapter VII. of Dr. Edwin L. Earp's "The Rural Church Movement." The Methodist Book Concern, New York City.

IX

THE RELATIONSHIP OF RELIGION AND AGRICULTURE

THE most potent factor in creating the new ruralism is the modern system of scientific agriculture. It has stimulated intelligent industry, increased production, enhanced the quality and quantity of consumption, and is rapidly achieving triumphs which all the world before never dreamed to be possible. It is well for the human race that science has conquered agriculture; but it will be better when religion shall have won them both.

What has religion to do with agriculture? One might as well ask, What has the leaven to do with the bread? Other things equal, the better the leaven, the finer the bread. Agriculture will not reach its greatest development nor its highest purpose until it is spiritualized by religion and quickened into a moral force by it. The tiller of the soil must be shown that he may sin by a misuse

of his land, and yet it is much more essential that he be brought to see that more important than the "holy earth" is the *righteous farmer*. Religion is the leaven of agriculture.

The Universality of Religion and Agriculture.

Religion and agriculture are both universal in their human interests. Each has an indispensable function in the life of the race and of the individual, which has hitherto been commonly recognized, but only for each in its own peculiar field. It is quite generally conceded that one seeks the welfare of man's spiritual being and its future life, while upon the other depends the continued existence of his physical nature. The idea of the universality of both as overlapping each the field of the other—of both contributing to the whole welfare of man—has, however, not been effectively impressed on the country people, who are, of all classes, most susceptible to receiving this principle. Its acceptance by them is yet to be accomplished.

The average farmer who is uninterested in religious matters may be explained by the fact that he fails to see the relationship between agriculture and religion. To him, re-

ligion is as far removed from agriculture as anything could be. The trouble is that he has not been trained to think of agriculture religiously, and the relationships have not been pointed out to him. He sees very plainly the intimate relation of hard labor and sturdy industry to a productive agriculture. He has been taught this from his youth up, by precept and example. He is beginning to comprehend the relation between a profitable agriculture and sound business principles; the Government experts are now emphasizing this phase of farming; and the great questions of rural credit, marketing, co-operative buying and selling, and similar business ideas as applied to modern agriculture, are uppermost in the rural mind. But the application of the principles of religion to all the varied activities of rural life has not yet been pressed home to the rural population with the vigor and conviction comparable to its importance as a factor in successful agricultural living.

It is on the basis of this principle of the universality of religion and agriculture, in their human interests, that the rural minister has his opportunity. Because the relationship does exist, the preacher can readily

point out the connection in terms of agriculture. The farmer who understands agriculture will understand the religious principle taught in terms of his life activity; and because of the significance of religion in his mode of living, he will not only be interested, but become an active searcher after further truth. And it is the knowledge of the truth that tends to make men free.

So much for the process of enlightening the "benighted" farmer! But before he can be enlightened, it will be necessary to educate the "ignorant" preacher! How can the blind lead the blind? What relationships can a preacher, who knows little or no agriculture, point out to the farmer? Few. So it becomes necessary for the preacher who would become a leader in the spiritual regeneration of rural America, first to acquaint himself with the facts, principles, laws and practices of modern agriculture. He must know agriculture in its scientific, artistic, practical, economic and sociological aspects, as well as his religion, to become an effective rural preacher. Otherwise, he is in danger of becoming to his rural parishioners as sounding brass, a clanging cymbal, or, worse, a bag of hot air. This preparation is not asking too much

of a rural leader who occupies so important and exalted a place in the country community as the rural preacher. He must minister unto men on their own plane of life, thought and activity, which, let it be said, may actually be a very high one, because of its complexity. So, while it is desirable to have the farmer see the philosophy of life in terms of both religion and agriculture, it is even more important that his preacher get the vision more clearly than he. There is, therefore, a mutual basis for a close tie of fellowship between the rural minister and his agricultural flock.

Agriculture is replete with spiritual ideas and ideals. They must be discovered, and, in the discovery, the ministers of the gospel should, because of their training, have a large share. These notions must then be translated into terms familiar to the common understanding of the masses, which will be possible for the translator who understands the languages of both the spiritual and the temporal, of Christ and of agriculture. When this is done, then the rural spiritualization must be popularized through the media of the press, the pulpit and other publicity agencies. Then the poets of the farm will see visions, the rural artists will catch inspirations, and

Christ will be seen coming to earth at all seasons, to all peoples, in all climes, with the miracle of each seedtime and harvest. And then, best of all, the people will understand.

CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF RELATIONSHIPS.

The farmer who depletes his soil of fertility is a sinner. This is a serious charge, and, if true, there are thousands to whom it will apply, making a majority of the farmers of the nation a most ungodly class. An indictment is not sufficient; there must be proof. Let the facts, therefore, be shown.

In the sight of the Almighty, a thousand years is as one day (2 Pet. 3:8). It makes no difference in the sight of the Lord whether a man does a wrong to a human being of his own generation or of some future generation. In either case the evil act is sin, and the performer thereof is a sinner. There is ample authority in the Scriptures to establish this principle of sinning against divine authority through wicked acts involving wrong to future generations (Deut. 5:9).

Making conditions of life hard for future generations by needless waste, or robbing them of a divinely given heritage, for our own selfish ease and indulgence, by needless

prodigality, must be counted as sin against the generation of individuals which does it. In no avenue of life is this sin more profoundly apparent than in agriculture. The sin of exhausting the soil of its fertility is most potent in causing a dire calamity for future generations. Let us trace to the logical conclusion the evil performance of needlessly exhausting the soil of its fertility.

Soil is rarely cultivated more than eight inches deep. Most of its available fertility comes from the first twelve inches of the surface. Although the roots of plants penetrate far below the surface soil, they do so mostly to secure additional water. The plant food which this deep-soil moisture holds in solution may, in general, be said to have been dissolved by the water as it passed through the upper layers of the soil near the surface. The average chemical analyses of a large number of various soils show that the first eight inches of an acre of ground contain the three most limited, but positively essential, plant foods, in round numbers as follows: Nitrogen, 3,000 pounds; phosphorus, 4,200, and potassium, 16,300.[1]

[1]See Isaac Phillips Roberts' "The Fertility of the Land." p. 14. 1906. The Macmillan Company, New York City.

Furthermore, the amounts of these elements removed yearly from an acre of soil, by leading crops, are, in round numbers, as follows:

APPROXIMATE AMOUNTS OF THE THREE MOST LIMITED FERTILIZERS REMOVED ANNUALLY FROM AN ACRE OF SOIL BY CERTAIN CROPS.[1]

Crop.	Nitrogen Pounds.	Phosphorus Pounds.	Potassium Pounds.
Corn, whole plant, 50 bushels	75	15	35
Wheat, 25 bushels	45	10	30
Potatoes, 200 bushels	40	10	60
Tobacco, 1,600 pounds	75	15	200
Timothy hay, 1½ tons	35	5	35

A soil is exhausted for plant production when any element in the soil necessary to plant growth is no longer available. This availability ceases long before the total supply is exhausted. Although the residue is capable of being released by chemical processes, it may not be in a soluble condition, and is, therefore, unavailable to the plant. Furthermore, long before all the available plant food is exhausted, the area of ground becomes economically unproductive or produces uneconomically. Supposing, however, that all these elements chemically shown to be contained in the first eight inches of soil

[1]Cf. Cyril G. Hopkins' "Soil Fertility and Permanent Agriculture," p. 154. 1910. Ginn & Company, Boston. Also, Lucius L. Van Slyke's "Fertilizers and Crops," p. 177. 1912. Orange Judd Company, New York City.

are available, that no additions of these elements are made from any source, and that the production of crops from an acre would be profitable until the entire amount of any of these fertilizing elements was used up, we may readily calculate from the preceding table how long it would take to exhaust the soil (first eight inches) completely. In the case of corn it would take about forty years, for the complete supply of nitrogen would then be exhausted; in the case of wheat, this exhaustion would result in sixty-six years. Suppose that, in the cultivation of tobacco, the nitrogen and the phosphorus supplies were to be maintained, but the potassium supply allowed to diminish. In just eighty-one years, according to the data given and the conditions assumed, tobacco would cease to grow to maturity.[1]

It will not be necessary to carry these crude estimates any further to emphasize the fact that, by practicing an agriculture that results in soil depletion, this generation of farmers is gradually bringing about a condition of soil impoverishment that will make human existence increasingly hard for the

[1]Cf. Bricker's "Agricultural Education for Teachers," pp. 18-20.

next and future generations who will inherit these God-given acres after us. The farmer who impoverishes the soil of his individual farm is personally responsible to God for his sinful acts in this regard. Let no farmer be deceived by his own conceits; God is not

mocked. He who conserves the natural resources of his soil is practicing a Christian virtue, and his good performance must be pleasing in the sight of God.

The land belongs to God; each farmer "owns" his farm only in trust. When this

generation is through using—not misusing—the land, the next will claim its divine inheritance, to be again held in trust by it for its successors.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. What has given rise to the new ruralism?
2. What is the relation of religion to agriculture?
3. Show how religion and agriculture are both universal in their interests to man.
4. Does the average farmer feel the relation of his agriculture to religion? Why?
5. How is the relationship of religion and agriculture the minister's opportunity?
6. Is the average rural preacher prepared to seize this opportunity? Why?
7. Give examples of spiritual ideas and ideals drawn from agriculture. Who should assist in developing them?
8. How may a farmer sin with his soil?
9. Is soil fertility a gift from God? To whom?
10. To whom does the land belong? What is the farmer's relation to the land he holds?

X

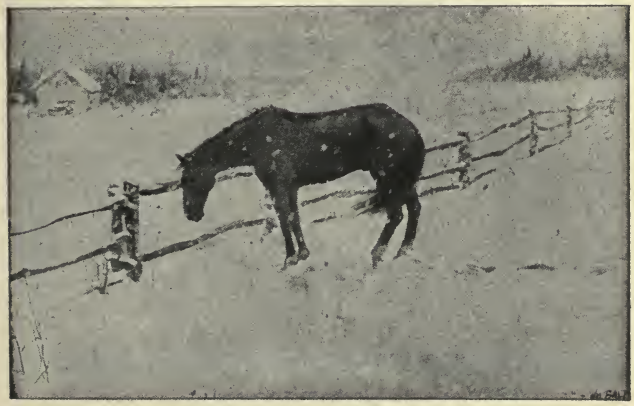
THE MESSAGE OF RELIGION TO COUNTRY LIFE

AGRICULTURE has not only developed the business industry of production, but it has also developed a mode of life. Religion has both a message and a ministry to the agricultural life of America.

The farm-tenant problem, so keenly felt in various sections, can be ameliorated through the recognition and application, by tenant and landlord, of religious principles in their dealings with each other; and it is the business of the church to see that the teachings of Christ are properly applied to this condition where it exists. It will take an enlightened and fearless ministry to lead many rural communities out of the meshes of this modern rural sociological curse.

The humane element in the man of the farm will find a constant guardian in religion. The finer sensibilities of the country people, no less than of city people, need to be con-

The Dwelling of a Farm Tenant and His Family—Located in the Middle West.



Forgotten.

stantly guarded and cultivated, and nothing is designed to accomplish such good results as the teachings of religion. What ingratitude is shown by the farmer who forgets his dumb animals in the fields in wintry storms, while he enjoys the comforts of his warm house, made possible for him by the blessings of God upon his plans and labors!

The consecration of agricultural wealth to religious and ethical purposes is another service that religion may render to agriculture. The accumulated wealth derived from agriculture should not be idle, neither should it all be applied merely to enhance the temporal welfare of the people. A due share should find its way to the endowment of Christian colleges, of rural departments in these colleges, and Christian colleges of agriculture for the training of young people for rural life under the care and direction of Christian faculties; to pay a decent living wage to the rural ministry; to provide for better country churches and other rural institutions; to enhance and enrich the community life with modern conveniences; to equip and improve the farm home; to spread the light of the Christian religion to others in the homeland and abroad, and to carry

An Ohio Rural Church Building Located in a Community of Agricultural Decline.

A Montana Church Building Located in a Valley Where Agriculture is Prosperous.

Other things equal, the country church faithfully mirrors the agricultural prosperity of a community.

forward the various enterprises of a true Christian civilization. The farmer who hoards his wealth has made a failure and is in danger of a bankrupt life. While we do not fully agree with the Irishman who, in response to an admonition to save, answered, "What's the use? The man who dies with a dollar ahead is a dollar out," yet it must be admitted that, in a sense, his answer expresses a truth. The farmer who hoards at the expense of mud roads, poor churches and schools, an inconvenient and unsubstantial dwelling for his family, depleted soil fertility, poorly paid farm labor, and other adverse rural conditions, that he might otherwise help to remedy, is not worthy of his high calling of bringing cheer and comfort to mankind by feeding, clothing and sheltering it.

There are many concrete instances generally recognized by the leaders in the rural-life movement wherein religion may be of great service to present-day agricultural life, and the number of them will grow by leaps and bounds with the increased attention that is given to the subject.

Religious institutions in the country communities derive their support from the profits of agriculture. Usually, the decline of agri-

culture in any community is accompanied by the decline of the country church. The support of rural religious institutions must come from the profits of husbandry, and, other things equal, the greater those profits, the greater will be the free offerings contributed to them by a grateful people.

It is the duty of the church to encourage and assist the farmer in his work. This does not mean that the country church should go into the business of farming, or into agricultural teaching, but it should furnish the inspiration, the encouragement and the vision for better things, agriculturally speaking. Suppose, for instance, that the farmer should learn a more productive agriculture without any encouragement, or even in spite of discouragement, of the church. Would not the church be somewhat embarrassed when later she should appeal to this same farmer for financial assistance? The church must interest herself in the farmer's business. Along with the temporal prosperity of her members she should, normally, be blessed with an increased temporal sustenance. Agriculture and religion should seek to bear each other's burdens, and to promote the prosperity and

welfare of each other as handmaids to the welfare of the life of man.

Mutual helpfulness of religion and the industry of the people is an orthodox doctrine. It is thus expressed in the rules of action for the members of one of the well-known church bodies of the world:

> It is expected of all who continue in these societies that they shall continue to evidence their desire for salvation,
>
> My doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another; helping each other in business, and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only.—*General Rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Par.* 31.

Science in agriculture has been established, the economic problems of agriculture give certain promise of solution, but this grand old industry, in which nearly half of our people are engaged, has yet to become spiritualized and vitalized with the idealism of our Christ. This development, which will be the greatest, properly comes as the climax; the others are elemental and basic, but this is essential and necessary. Agriculture must yield a religious interpretation of life. Physical death must follow an unsatisfied hunger, but there can be no eternal life without spiritual food. An agriculture that

is too sterile to properly feed mankind, both physically and spiritually, is not a fit agriculture for a Christian people.

In this final and highest development, the ministers of our country should assume the leadership. In the preparation of these leaders, the church schools and the religious seminaries may have a large share. The time is now at hand for the undertaking of an earnest effort to answer this call of life to agriculture.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. How can the church assist in the solution of the tenant-landlord problem?

2. What can the church do in cultivating the humane element in the rural people?

3. Why should agricultural wealth be consecrated to beneficent purposes? Mention some of these purposes.

4. Mention other instances wherein religion may render service to the present-day agricultural life.

5. Why should the church be interested in increasing the profits of husbandry?

6. What phase of agriculture is yet to be developed? What agencies may assist in this development?

XI

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION THROUGH RURAL POEMS AND SONGS

THE life and experiences of a people are expressed through its poems and its songs. With the rapid growth of the cities in the United States, which has urbanized a large per cent. of our people, we have developed an increasingly large supply of urban literature by city-minded people. Just as the rural population has decreased in percentage to the whole population, so has the production of rural poems and songs decreased.

Recently, at an encampment of a religious organization, the membership of which was made up mostly of young people from the churches of a certain American city, the writer could find but two rural songs in the song-book that was being used. These songs were "America" and "Scattering the Precious Seeds"! The same song-book is used in many rural churches. The songs of the rural churches have become urbanized.

This urbanizing of the rural mind through the use of poems and songs which appeal to city people, and which are seldom based on agricultural life, as we know it in America, is one of the things that the new but great rural movement is bound to correct. The religion and the sentiments of the soil are developing poets and singers who are interpreting this peculiar new life of the American farmer. The future will see great strides in these directions. Songs expressing sentiments like that on page 8 should fill our rural song books.

The farm poets will see visions and they will be expressed to the world in terms of agricultural thought. Who but a farm poet could catch the vision of the Christ and his religion in the commonplace potato?

THE SONG OF THE POTATO.

By Rev. R. D. Morgan.

I was born long ago, I can not tell when,
But I'm older than all the races of men;
In the far-away South, by the side of the sea,
A birthright commission was given to me.

And so through the ages my business has been
To supply the real wants of the children of men;
I've traveled as far as the races have run,
And comforted all, like the rays of the sun.

I am only a spud, a commonplace spud;
I thrive in the sand and I thrive in the mud;
At home with the rich and in love with the poor,
I'm the friend of all men from mountain to moor.

I'm here on the earth with a great work in hand,
Like the Master of old, on the sea and the land.
So I take my own place as he hath decreed,
And strive in my way to relieve the world's need.

And happy the man who doeth the same,
In obedient love to that wonderful Name,
And comforts the child on the poor cottage floor,
Or the wanderer lost on the pitiless shore.

Tennyson expressed in rural terms his vision of God and his incomprehensibleness when he wrote:

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies.
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

Poetry and literature have many similar examples, but how little are they used! The great rural poems must be collected and used, for they may contribute a large share in reviving and enhancing

THE COUNTRY FAITH.

Here in the country's heart
Where the grass is green,
Life is the same sweet life
As it e'er has been.

Trust in a God still lives,
And the bell at morn
Floats with the thought of God
O'er the rising corn.

God comes down in the rain,
And the crop grows tall—
This is the country faith,
And the best of all. —*Norman Gale.*

Rural religious songs must not be overlooked nor neglected in charging rural life with the religious spirit. "Bringing in the Sheaves," "There Shall Be Showers of Blessing," "Beulah Land," "Joy to the World," "The Church in the Wildwood," "Day is Dying in the West," "America," "The Call of the Reapers," "The Farmer's Song of Praise," and similar songs, must be more universally sung among the country people.

One of the surest ways to instill a love for country life among country folks is for them to sing about it. Every civilization, and each national group, has its songs which interpret its thoughts, motives, emotions and ambitions. The spiritual element in agricultural life may be greatly enhanced through the medium of rural songs.

With the increase of our city population, "The Star-Spangled Banner," which is not a rural song, has come into greater favor as a

national hymn; but "America" will ever hold first place in the hearts of those who are truly country bred.

The songs that are to be sung in the rural churches should be well selected—as much for their rural as for their spiritual significance. Rural congregations, singing about the "city with streets of gold," or the "beautiful city so fair," may do more to prompt the young life of the community citywards than may be commonly realized. If the rural preacher would save the youth of the countryside for his ministry, let him look well to the selection of the songs that are sung in his church services.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. What is the significance of a people's songs and poems?
2. What effect has the urbanizing of America had upon its songs and literature?
3. Recite "The Song of the Potato."
4. Recite Tennyson's "Flower in the Crannied Wall."
5. Recite "The Country Faith."
6. Name some religious rural songs.
7. Why should the rural songs be sung in the country?

XII

A CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAM

A PROGRAM is a plan for the progression of events for the purpose of definite accomplishments. Its importance can scarcely be overestimated. No great industrial undertaking is begun without a program. The program is the first consideration before beginning actual activities. The school begins with a program. The church services follow a program. The church should begin its season's activities with one and follow it.

There are two kinds of programs: one is of an immediate character, which is to be used at once, and then it will have served its whole purpose; another is the permanent or constructive program. This latter kind is for the purpose of working out some policy, and endures as a guide and goal for many years. A well-formed and "thought-through" community program ought to anticipate a constructive, community-building enterprise of from five to ten years' duration.

A program, besides being definite, must be constructive. This implies an aim, the eventual realization of which furnishes the purpose for every part of the program. A program without a goal is like a lane that leads over the hill to nowhere. Do not impose a purposeless program upon any rural community.

Another characteristic of a program is that if it is to result effectively, it must be workable. At least two things should be asked concerning every program before it ought to be permitted to go into operation: the first is, Does it fit the community? and second, Is it capable of being used by those who are to be charged with the responsibility of executing it? Many a program, excellent in itself, fails because it is beyond the capability of the community where it is to be promoted. On the other hand, a program too heavy for the resources—either mental or economic—of the leader and his lieutenants, is also doomed. No plan or program will execute itself.

A social program, as any other, must be thought through. The fact that a program has not been worked out in some detail is usually proof that it has not been properly

thought out. It takes time to think. The thinking must precede the formation of the program. In the summer and early fall are good times to think out and construct the rural social and church programs. Every rural leader should have both immediate and permanent programs.

An Apple Sunday. Start the season's program of the rural church before October 1. Set apart one Sunday as a special day in honor of the farming activities of the community. If you live in an apple-growing section, have an Apple Sunday; if in a corn-growing section, a Corn Sunday; if in a dairy section, a Dairy Sunday. Draw the moral lessons from that phase of agriculture which the day is to celebrate, and illustrate these lessons from the products or the incidents occasioned in producing them.

Let displays of products be exhibited at the church. Decorate the pulpit with apples and corn and wheat and flowers—all of them are the blessings of God. Make the bringing of these choice fruits and grains to the house of God the occasion of thankfulness for the harvests which he has granted to his people.

A Rural-life Children's Day. Have a Children's Day program in which farm life

shall have full sway. The following subjects would be in keeping for consideration at such an occasion: "Why I Love My Cow;" "How God Sends the Rain;" "The Wheat that Bore a Hundred-fold;" "Sin Weeds;" "The Tares;" "The Wicked Husbandman;" "The Death of the Flowers;" "The Twenty-third Psalm."

The songs, also, should have a rural significance, of which the following are representative: "America;" "Bringing in the Sheaves;" "There Shall Be Showers of Blessing;" "Scattering the Precious Seed;" "Beulah Land;" "Seeds of Promise."

The pastor should not neglect to adapt his sermonette to the rural spirit of the occasion. The moral lesson should be applicable to the life and practices of the young people of the open country. Rev. Judson Davis, a rural preacher of Verona, N. Y., preached a sermon on "Friends and Foes" in which he spoke of alfalfa, clover, corn, potatoes, oats, cows (some cows), etc., as the farmer's friends; and thistles, cockle, quack-grass, coddling-moth, Hessian fly, rust, etc., as his foes. And the moral application and significance of these things were not forgotten. This is the idea. Let us amplify it on a big scale.

A CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAM

The permanent program must be the main line along which the community will be moved by the realization of each temporary program. Statesmanship qualities must be evident in the permanent program, and its accomplishments must make a man's job. Don't be flighty, nor yet too conservative, in mapping out the things that are to be realized. Remember, it is the accomplishment of the "impossible" that gives to men the divine right of leadership. Meet the echo of the howl, "It can't be done," with a presentation of the thing accomplished!

The man on the job must build his own program—and he, also, must be the genius of its fulfillment. The plan must be democratic in that it must include everybody in the community; it must be expansive in that it shall extend the boundaries of its possibilities to the uttermost; it must be constructive in that it must leave the community in a better condition than when it was formed; it must be generous in that it must leave a larger and better life in its wake; and it must be Christian in that the church may squarely meet her responsibility to the country people. Rural America demands larger and better programs of her churches.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Define a program. When should it be formed?
2. Explain the two kinds of programs.
3. What is a constructive program?
4. What makes an effective program?
5. When is a program "thought through"?
6. Describe an Apple Sunday.
7. Describe a Rural-life Children's Day.
8. Discuss some of the qualities of a permanent, constructive, community program.

XIII

THE ONE-DAY SINGLE-PURPOSE SURVEY

"WE may define the social survey as the collection and arrangement, in scientific and orderly form, of all the information about any given community, which has immediate social significance and constructive value."[1] The survey is to-day universally accepted as the correct way to get a first-hand acquaintance with the social, the religious, the educational or the economic needs or opportunities or resources of any community. By its means the leader is enabled to make a correct diagnosis.

The value of any survey depends upon three things; namely, the motive, the method and the use. The results from the last—the use of the data secured by a survey—is the excuse for its making, no matter how altruistic the motive, nor how scientific the method.

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[1]Herman N. Morse in "The Country Church and Community Co-operation," edited by Henry Israel, p. 67. Association Press, New York City.

Dan B. Brummitt[1] has pointed out the futility in merely making a survey, when he cites the cases of the priest and the Levite who made surveys on their journeys from Jerusalem to Jericho.[2] The results obtained from the surveys made by these individuals were not worth the making. But the survey of the good Samaritan was worth while—its results justified the efforts. "Never make a survey unless you are grimly determined to do something with it. And, usually, that grim purpose must be the force that starts the survey in the first place."

The problem of every rural minister is to know his field—not in general terms, but specifically. To end this, a community survey is necessary. The data thus secured must then be analyzed, systematized, tabulated and correlated. Only then does it furnish a safe guide for future activities. Inability to use the data when once secured may prove to be a very serious misfortune to a community.[3]

There are many kinds of surveys, as the State, the county, the township and the com-

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[1]See the *Epworth Herald*, p. 75, for Jan. 27, 1917.

[2]See Luke 10: 30-35.

[3]See the author's "Solving the Country Church Problem," p. 289. The Abingdon Press, New York City.

munity, depending on the area involved. Again, there are the surveys of social institutions, as the church survey, the school survey, etc. It quite frequently happens that no specific nor tangible result comes to a community through a State or county survey. The chief causes for this lie in the facts that too much is surveyed for; the survey is made by persons outside the community, or for purposes in which the community has a doubtful interest; too much time elapses between the making of the survey and the receipt of the report resulting from it; and the people do not receive the beneficial reaction that comes from participation in the making of the survey themselves. These shortcomings have led to the development of the community one-day-single-purpose survey.[1]

The phrase by which this survey is known explains or defines it. It is a campaign for one certain thing, to be made on one given day, by the people living in the community. It is made under direction and strictly according to plan.

The first step is to determine what it is desired to survey for. The simplicity of the

[1]See *Rural Manhood* for May, 1913.

survey contributes largely to its effectiveness; therefore, not too many objects should be sought. The religious status of the community, for example, is a rather large object to be determined. If this is the object sought, nothing more should be included, as the educational status, or the economic, or the industrial. The survey sheets, or question blanks, should then be made to conform to the object sought.

The second step is to call a mass-meeting of the community, the purpose of which has been previously well advertised and carefully explained, so that the people of the community shall have a correct understanding of what it is all about. Speakers should explain the method of the survey and the use to be made of the data thus secured, in forwarding projects for community betterment. The people must be taken in complete confidence, and the welfare of the community emphasized. A favorable expression should be secured from the leading persons at the meeting or from the meeting as a whole. A committee should be appointed to direct the survey, the date for making the survey should be set, and volunteer surveyors should be called for. The time for a second mass-meeting should

also be determined upon, at which the results of the survey are to be made known, and plans formulated and discussed for projects of community welfare in accordance with the revelations of the survey.

Before the survey day, teams of two each should have been secured and instructed in the methods of approach and of securing correct and unprejudiced answers. The whole community should be divided into survey sections, each section being of a size so that one team may easily visit all the families living within it, in the allotted time. The teams should all assemble and start out from a given place.

As soon as the data or survey sheets are returned, the summary and the analysis should begin, the results of which should be graphically represented for use at the second mass-meeting. The pastor, if he be the leader of the movement, and the survey committee, ought to determine upon recommendations and plans to be presented for adoption at the second mass-meeting. It is at this meeting that the results of the survey are to be driven home, and here ought to begin the upward movement. It is a critical time, and all possible turns of the meeting should be

carefully anticipated. With its adjournment, opportunities for community betterment will have been won or lost.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. What is a social survey?
2. Upon what does the survey depend?
3. Read the report of the three surveys given in Luke 10: 30-35.
4. After the survey—what?
5. Name the different kinds of surveys. What are their shortcomings?
6. Explain fully the one-day-single-purpose survey. When and why are the mass-meetings held?
7. Has your community ever had such a survey?

XIV

THE APPLICATION OF THE SURVEY

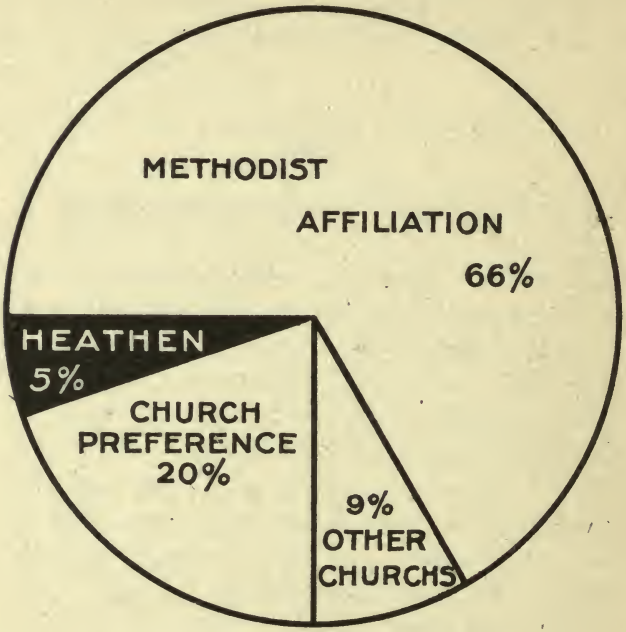
IN order to illustrate the application of the one-day-single-purpose community survey so far as practicable, I herewith present the one made under the direction of the writer, and the pastor, the Rev. E. H. Van Scoy, in the rural community of Cardiff, N. Y. This rural village and countryside has but one church, lies several miles from any railroad, and its interests are almost wholly agricultural. The people are of the normal, more progressive rural type.

Some remarkable things were discovered in the survey at Cardiff. The summary of facts is here tabulated and also presented in graphical illustrations. A consideration of the most striking deductions is also made.

The Survey Summarized.

1. Number of families surveyed, 62.

2. Church allegiance (47): Cardiff M. E. Church, 41; South Onondaga M. E. Church,



I. CHURCH AFFILIATION

1; Presbyterian, 1; Baptist, 1; Universalist, 1; Catholic, 2.

3. Church preference (12): Methodist Episcopal, 9; Baptist, 1; Universalist, 1; Catholic, 1.

4. Members of no church, nor preference for any church, 3.

5. Occupations of families canvassed:

farmers, 47; retired farmers, 2; day laborer, 1; merchant, 1; engineer, 1; painter, 1; widows, 8; nothing, 1.

6. Regular (?) church attendants, 34; occasional church attendants, 8; non-attendants at church, 20.

7. Regular Sunday-school attendants, 30; occasional Sunday-school attendants, 5; non-attendants at Sunday school, 27.

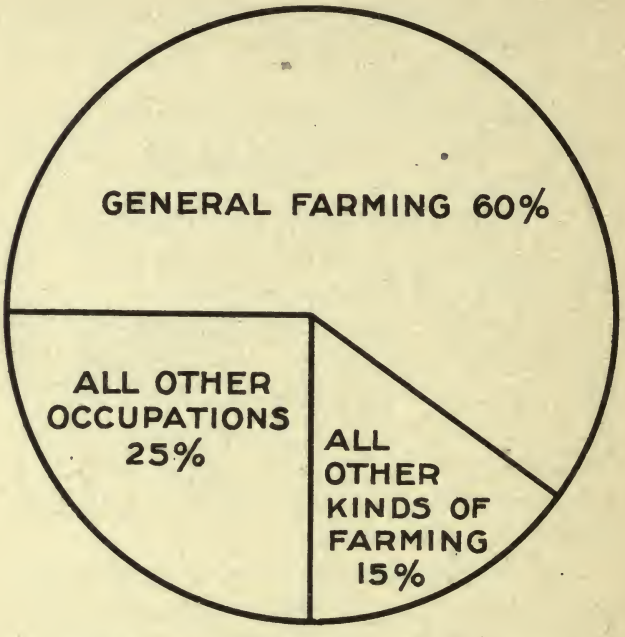
8. Number expressing interest in local church, 51; number not giving an expression, 9; number expressing a disinterest, 2.

9. Church allegiance of ancestors: Methodist Episcopal, 44; Catholic, 4; no church, 4; no expression (blank), 5; Baptist, 3; Episcopalian, 1; Protestant, 1.

10. Religious papers taken or read: *Christian Herald,* 21; *Northern Christian Advocate,* 7; *Sunday School Advocate,* 4; *Sabbath Readings,* 2; *Witness,* 2; *Epworth Herald,* 1; *Christian Advocate,* 1; none, 29; yes, but no paper named, 2.

11. Average size of farm of those reporting (43), 67 acres. Number of farmers not giving size of farm, 4.

12. Kind of farming practiced: general farming, 37; dairying, 2; fruit, 2; not reporting, 5.



II. COMMUNITY OCCUPATION

13. Number who will endeavor to attend special meetings, 36; number uncertain, 9; number who decline to attend, 13; number not expressing themselves, 4.

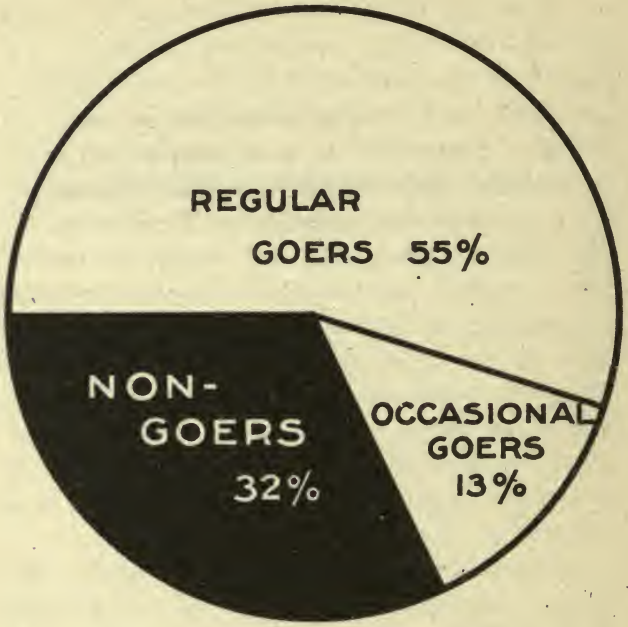
14. Forty express themselves as having a principal interest in the local church.

Church Allegiance and Preference. In reference to the matter of church allegiance,

we find that about 66 per cent. of the entire population of the community declares allegiance to the Methodist Episcopal Church; 9 per cent. to all other churches; 20 per cent. declare a preference to some church; while 5 per cent. declare themselves either opposed to, or as having absolutely no interest in, churches. This 5 per cent. must be counted as a heathen population. The 20 per cent. expressing a church preference is the portion of the population where the first work of conversion should begin, and, judging from the large number that have declared their church preference, there should be a large increase in membership of the local church.

There is only one church in Cardiff, and that is the Methodist Church. Five other denominations are represented among the families expressing allegiance to churches other than the Methodist. It is interesting to note how far people will travel to church to associate with others of like belief, for there are no other churches within several miles of Cardiff.

Church and Sunday-school Goers. Fifty-five per cent. of the community goes to church, but only 49 per cent. goes to Sunday



III. CHURCH ATTENDANCE

school regularly. The occasional attendants at church are also greater in numbers than the occasional Sunday-school goers. Thirty-two per cent. of the people in Cardiff and immediately attached country never go to church, while 43 per cent. of them never go to Sunday school. Here surely is a great work to be done.

Religious Papers and Church Attendance. A remarkable fact is brought out in the relation that exists between regular church attendance and the religious reading of the people of a community. Fifty-three per cent. of the families take an average of one and one-third religious papers, while 47 per cent. of the families of the community take no religious periodicals whatever. The regular church attendance of the community is 55 per cent., while the remainder is 45 per cent. No mistake is made in considering the religious periodical to be the pastor's chief assistant. Preachers and religious workers will please take note of this comparison, and remember that it pays large dividends to place good religious periodicals into the homes of any community.

The Occupations of the Community. The chief occupation of the community is farming, being 75 per cent. Those farmers who are engaged in general farming compose 60 per cent., while those who are engaged in other kinds of farming compose only 15 per cent. of the total. All other occupations represented in the community, including the loafers and those who have no particular occupation, make up the 25 per cent. of the balance.

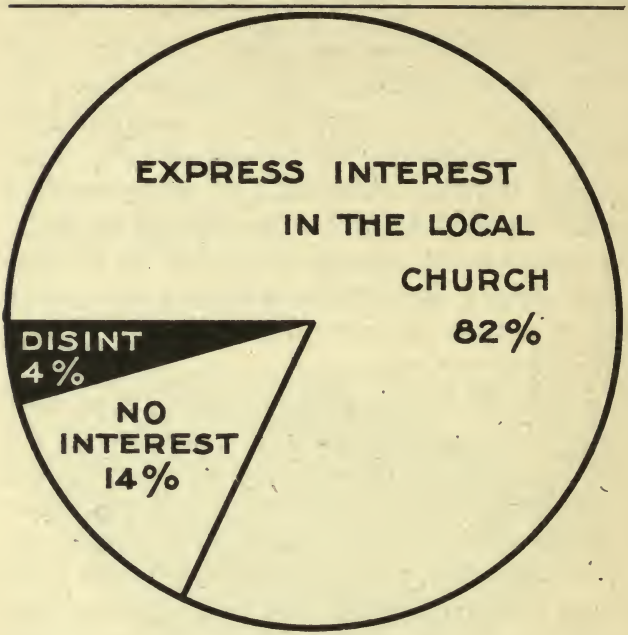
IV. SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANTS

Brother Van Scoy, therefore, if he would reach this population through its own interests, will have to inform himself along the lines of general farming, especially. Warren's "Elements of Agriculture," Brooks' "Agriculture," a three-volume series, or Gardner's "Successful Farming," ought to be included in his ministerial course of

study. This does not mean that Rev. Mr. Van Scoy should go into the business of farming, but he ought to know enough about modern methods of farming to get the many points of contact that such an understanding will furnish. Ought we not be all things to all men for the sake of Christ? Well, Brother Van Scoy's men church-members are nearly all farmers, and most of these are general farmers.

Interest in the Church. Nearly everybody is interested in the local church at Cardiff, for 82 per cent. expressed themselves as being interested in the welfare of this particular church. There were 14 per cent. who expressed no interest in the church, while 4 per cent. expressed themselves as being positively disinterestd in its welfare, and said that they did not believe in churches.

It is interesting to observe in this connection that while 82 per cent. say they are particularly interested, only 66 per cent. of the total population belongs to the church, and the burden of keeping up the church probably devolves upon this 66 per cent., or less. It looks very much like some one is trying to get something for nothing. The man who accepts the increase in the valuation



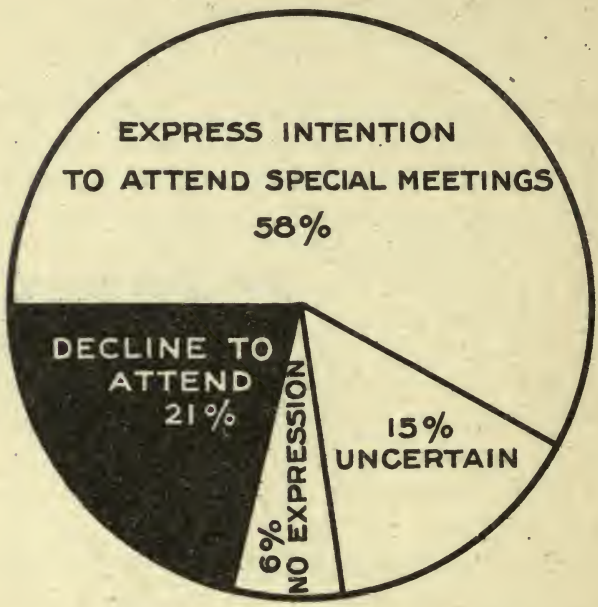
V. INTEREST IN LOCAL CHURCH

of his land, because of the presence of a church, and then neglects or refuses to pay toward its support, is nothing more or less than a social parasite.

The Land and Church Support. A little more than three thousand acres of land are held by the farmers of this community, which composes 75 per cent. of the population. This area is less than five square miles.

Suppose that every farmer in the community, whether he belongs to any church or not, should pay twenty cents, for each acre that he owns, towards the support of this church. The total sum realized would be only about six hundred dollars. It is probable that not more than 50 per cent. of all the land of the community is owned by the 66 per cent. of Methodist members. In that case, each Methodist farmer will have to pay each year about forty cents on each acre of land that he owns, towards the support of the Cardiff Church. Doubtless this estimate is a little too high, but it shows the trend of affairs in rural communities where the church must depend upon the land for its support. Brother Van Scoy and his rural charge will be vitally interested in soil fertility and in increased production. Productive farming is here the life of the church.

Three thousand acres is not enough land to support one church. That is only five square miles of territory, and this places practically all of the members within two miles of the church, and the great majority live nearer. In the open country and small rural villages, one church ought to serve from ten to sixteen square miles of territory. This

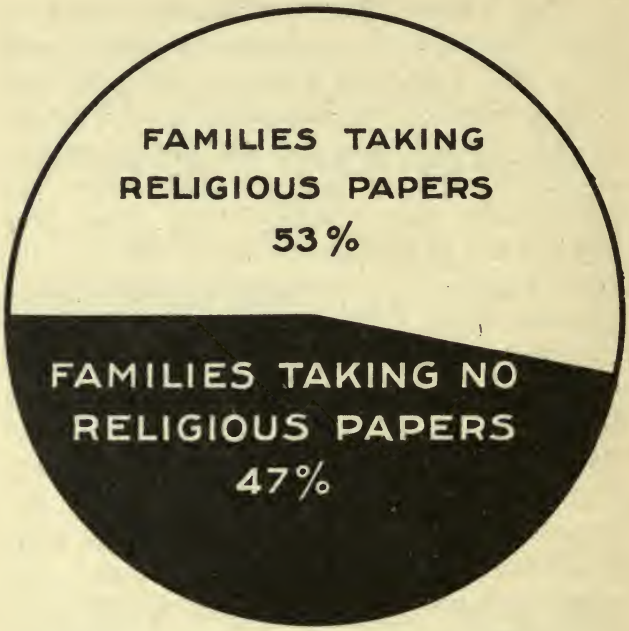


VI. CHURCH ATTENDANCE PROMISED would place every member within five miles of the church, or a fifteen-minute automobile ride from the place of worship. Even if the folks must drive a horse, the distance may be covered in half an hour. Ten square miles of land would reduce the pro-rata cost per acre to about fifteen cents, which is getting the cost of the farmer's religion down to where it ought to be.

THE APPLICATION OF THE SURVEY

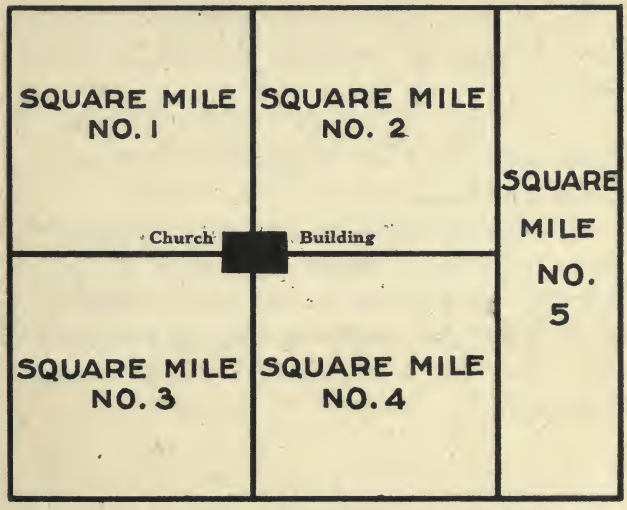
The Cardiff Church needs to expand in every direction. It needs more members and more land under its influence that will contribute towards its support. It will be an economic proposition for the farm members of this church to get out and hustle for Christ, for every farmer that joins this church will reduce the cost to the present farm members in direct ratio to the number of acres owned by the new converts. That is a selfish way of looking at the situation, I admit, and may even appear sordid, but it is one of the main elements in the solution of the rural church problem. I do not believe that a farmer is really converted until the change is manifested in the soil that he tills. A better religion makes a better farmer, and a better farmer makes a better church.

A Revival is Coming. A great religious awakening ought to sweep over the countryside at Cardiff. Fifty-eight per cent. of the people said that they would endeavor to attend the series of special services about to be held in the local church; there were 15 per cent. more who were uncertain about coming; 6 per cent. gave no expression on this point, while 21 per cent. positively declined to attend the meetings. From the expressions of



VII. RELIGIOUS READING

the people of the community, Brother Van Scoy will expect over half the population of Cardiff community to crowd into his church every evening. If the people of Cardiff and vicinity live up to their expression, and the Christian people embrace their opportunity, Billy Sunday will not be needed at Cardiff.



VIII. CARDIFF CHURCH SERVES ONLY FIVE SQUARE MILES OF TERRITORY

Questions and Suggestions for Discussion.

1. Would you say that there were too many or too few things surveyed for in the Cardiff survey? Why?

2. What do you think of the church-allegiance situation in Cardiff community?

3. How does your community compare with Cardiff in reference to church and Sunday-school goers?

4. What is the relation between the reading of religious papers and church attendance?

5. Of what benefit is it to the preacher to know accurately the occupations represented in his community?

6. Why should it be necessary for a community to get an actual expression of the interest its people have in the local church?

7. What do you think of the proposition of a land-supported church? Why do you think so?

XV

THE OUTPOSTS OF THE CHURCH

THERE is one sign of conspicuous weakness to be noted in connection with the religious work of many rural communities. It is the tendency to abandon the outposts. It often happens that in some out-of-the-way neighborhood there are a half-dozen families who need the ministrations of the church, and who would appreciate it and be greatly helped thereby, but who are seldom reached. They are neglected, while their more favored city brethren enjoy the helpfulness, and even the luxury, of regular divine services each week in the year.

A disheartening prospect presents itself. Groups of these simple-minded, open-hearted, country people, unaggressive in their demands, and owning little of this world's goods, are the Macedonias of America. True, the call that comes up from these remote rural communities to almost every rural and

village preacher in the land is not an inspiring one. The average preacher finds little inspiration from preaching in a dilapidated, little, old, half-empty church or a bare-walled, rural schoolhouse. There is, seemingly, little response to his efforts, and the outlook for rendering future service is indeed discouraging. It seems like wasting the time and energy of a good pastor to minister to such as these.

Meanwhile, it is increasingly expensive to own and provide for a horse and buggy. Horse hire is out of the question, while the owning of an automobile is not to be thought of, or, owning an automobile, the bad roads will not permit its use during several months of the year. All these things, and many others, tend to induce the parson to take the line of least resistance, and the decision, or lack of it, may result in a real tragedy of human lives in the rural neighborhood so abandoned to—could it be to anything else than to the devil?

It all means, simply, that the little wayside church, once cared for, and prosperous, perhaps, and certainly adorned by loving hands and supported by the hard labor of a race of hardy pioneers, is destined to fall into

decay and to become, by and by, the home of bats, mice, moths and spiders, and finally to disappear altogether.

But a greater calamity may come to the world through the fall of the rural community church. With the passing of the physical edifice of worship, the decay of the spiritual life of the people is a direct result. The people are left to their own devices, and wickedness springs up on every hand. Any new and strange and often damnable doctrine that may be presented to these abandoned people may be, and often is, embraced; or, what is quite as bad, the younger generations grow to manhood and womanhood with no teachings about the true doctrines of Christ.

The cities derive many of their best men and women from these outlying rural districts. Much of the city's best spiritual life is discovered and developed there. Credit for the strength that comes up from the country to the cities may often be traced to the painstaking work, in those communities, of some faithful Christian laborer whom the city has never honored, but whose memory is enshrined in the hearts and lives of men and women who are as true and sure as the soil from which they came.

A majority of the young men who enter the ministry come from the rural districts. When a little, unpromising outstation of the church is abandoned, it may mean not only the present loss of these native-born Americans, but the future loss of some candidate for the ministry, a future leader of the church, a lay leader of to-morrow in government, business or education, or even the hero of civic righteousness for a grateful city.

No outpost should be surrendered without the weightiest reason and most honest purpose. I think that the foremost leaders of the church are agreed that we can not afford to abandon the outposts—and I have reference especially to the outposts of the homeland. There should be no family in rural America without pastoral service and care. None of the Master's sheep may be left shepherdless.

But the proposition of the abandonment of the outposts is now clearly before us, with no adequate solution hitherto proposed or applied. The questions now arise: How shall we establish and hold them? Are there any practical and effective methods that may be immediately available? There are in most rural parishes opportunities for establishing

and holding outposts in rural centers, where much good work may be done. It may probably be undesirable to put up a building, but services may be held in the farmhouses and in the schoolhouses.

There are two classes of outposts with which we, as rural workers, should be vitally concerned: first, the little missions or branches—trading-posts of the kingdom—that may be established in the rural districts among the people living in strategic neighborhoods a few miles from the stronger country, village and town churches; and, second, those struggling charges in the open country that are remotely located from any strong church that is able to take care of them, and far from another.

Social-center Parish Plan.

The solution of the problem involving the first class of outposts is obviously to be found in the adaptation of Dr. Edwin L. Earp's suggestion of the social-center parish plan, as outlined in Chapter VII. of his book entitled "The Rural Church Movement." The strong rural church must encourage, vitalize and inspire these smaller and weaker churches of the open country. If new centers

of religious activity are established in the outlying districts, where worship is carried on in the schoolhouses or the farmsteads, the "Church at the Center" must lead them.

Just here arises the most difficult problem. It will take more than glaringly illustrated posters and folders to put the real spirit of service and Christian sacrifice into this work. The job can be accomplished only through the actual contact of human beings. The grasp of the hand of true Christian fellowship, the sound of the voice of an earnest Christian worker, and the living presence of a fellow-man imbued with the spirit of the Master that he serves—these alone can swing the thousands of little rural centers into the line of discipleship.

But where shall we get the rural prophets, who will go out among the country folk to carry the gospel of Christian ideals, the correct notions about a clean personal life, and the orthodox teachings of the Bible? The average minister of the central church is all too busy with his immediate, local charge, for the demands are often very great. Of course, he might have the services of an assistant or of a rural deaconess. But even that would not be sufficient help in most places, while it

would prove quite expensive for even the stronger rural charges.

A suggestion comes from a local preacher in Oregon, who, several months ago, raised this very question and himself has suggested the remedy. Mr. Edward C. Frost, of Portland, states that in the South of England certain churches have instituted a system of local preachers on the quarterly plan, "whereby the intelligent men of the larger churches are regularly used in the small villages and rural neighborhoods, under the direction of a superintendent. The system itself develops them for the work, and the very best and brainiest men of business are glad to help as occasion demands. Many young men are thereby prepared for the ministry."

Here is a plan developed from necessity and tested by experience, that ought to appeal to the church administrators in America. The stronger preachers, who have organizing ability, and power to lead, inspire and get things done, should be appointed to these center churches, with authority to organize their best laymen into teams for rural gospel service among the outposts that lie about their churches and immediate communities.

These teams could take turns about, each rendering rural center, religious work for one-quarter of the year. Gradually the work ought, under proper leadership, to grow efficient, while the cost could be kept at the minimum; in fact, the work ought easily to become self-supporting from the start.

In most districts where there are church people, there is often a devoted man or woman who is willing to bring together the few children and adults of the neighborhood for Sunday school. These persons could obviously be systematically enlisted in the plan. In some of the remote outpost communities in the Province of Alberta, Canada, these devoted leaders have gathered in their neighbors and friends to schoolhouses and farmhouses, and read, for their main Sunday service, the department conducted by the writer in the farm journal of that region, the *Farm and Ranch Review.*

There is a very unfortunate tendency on the part of too many of our people to leave all the spiritual ministrations to the clergy, when consecrated laymen might do much of this. One of the good results which one of Billy Sunday's campaigns leaves in a city is

a well-organized, enthusiastic group of consecrated laymen who go out far and near from their native city to be living witnesses of the love of God, especially to them, and to proclaim the truth to others. The same plan on a smaller scale and just as systematically organized, under the direction of the local minister, to work out from each country, village and town center where there is a strong rural church, is what I am here urging.

Rev. David Keppel, a minister at Phœnix, N. Y., started such a plan one fall. When the plan was well under way, it developed into a series of neighborhood revivals, of which the central church was the leader. The reaction on the central church was so beneficial that the local minister was gladly given up each Sunday evening, so that he might assist in conducting services at one of the many outposts.

The itinerant pastor offers another solution. Probably his day and service are not fully past. Doubtless there is a place for the traveling minister in certain areas, especially where the churches are scattered, as suggested in the second class. It would be a good thing for our leading denominations

to establish a few such offices, to be filled, not by failures, nor college students, nor retired ministers, but with vigorous young preachers who know the rural mind, who sympathize with rural life and work, and who have a vision of what is to be done. It might be much better to devote some of the home mission fund in this way than in bolstering up, from year to year, for an indefinite period, certain societies and local groups that should long ago have become self-supporting. A rural, pastoral, efficiency missionary ought to be able to earn his salary in the work of placing hundreds of appointments on a self-sustaining basis.

With the modern means of travel by rail, and the automobile and the advent of good roads, the traveling preacher is a feasible institution. The conditions of life are now past the pioneer stage in most parts of America, so that better facilities are available for entertaining the itinerant in his rounds to the churches of his circuit.

Understand, this is recommended only as a temporary expedient—as the circuit-rider system must necessarily be—to be revived in those depopulated and exploited sections of the country where something must be done to

care for the outposts that have resulted from the depletion. The situation, as it exists in the older States, is, we hope, only temporary, and, as the new economic and sociological conditions become adjusted to a new balance, these outposts will gradually disappear by being absorbed into larger community religious organizations and enterprises, or will themselves develop into central churches.

Farmstead Meeting Plan.

There are always new possibilities in old methods. Old methods of church work and social engineering need constant revision to meet the needs of a progressive social development. Old customs, that linger only in the memory of the older people of this generation, may often be revived, with proper adaptation, by the social leader who has the capacity of initiative.

The cottage prayer-meeting, once a popular method of church work among rural people, has to-day lapsed into obscurity. In the days when churches were few, the roads bad and the farmwork of the pioneer was pressing, the neighborhood prayer-meeting plan was at once a means of encouragement and relaxation, through this religious

agency, while it solved the problems of distance and lack of social intercourse among the people.

With the increase of population, the advent of better roads and the building of more churches, doubtless people felt inclined to give preference to the common meeting-place for prayer-meeting purposes. The custom gradually went out of use.

To-day, however, many sections of rural America again present the condition of sparsely inhabited neighborhoods, with their dead or dying rural churches. There is a dwindling social life, and a stinted religious experience. There is a loss of interest in these finer things of life, which attachment to a distant town or city can not reawaken.

It is in these places of the open country where a revival of the neighborhood prayer-meeting at the farmsteads may be made the effective means of combining social development with a stimulating religious life. No harm can possibly come to either through the other, when brought together under the roof of the average American farm home.

A good example of what I have in mind is the achievement of Rev. Ira G. McCormick, of Oxford, O. When he came to his charge,

he discovered, through a survey, that his church was responsible for a rather large rural membership. He had given some attention to rural church problems and opportunities before that time, and so was keenly interested in this farm constituency. He determined to investigate the real situation thoroughly. So, during the next summer vacation period, when the work of his town church was much lighter, he seized the opportunity for doing this work.

"I made a deal," said he, "with a horse-trader for the use of an old gray mare, with which to make the canvass among the outlying rural districts." This horse was afterwards called, throughout the country, "the minister's white 'six-cylinder' "!

"I started one pleasant afternoon," said Mr. McCormick, "on the northeast road, armed with three cards, designating the three families of my church on the calling-list for that section. By the end of two afternoons, I had found fourteen families who claimed our church as their own. Upon investigating an old membership roll, I found that they were entitled to their claim."

The other roads out of town did not reveal so many families out of touch with the

church. Some of these country people asserted that as much as five years had passed since the previous pastoral call had been made.

The next step was to reawaken a new loyalty and interest in religious things in these newly discovered families who had gone so long neglected. It was obviously an impossible task for the minister to get all these people to his church; but, true to his type of leadership, he said: "I will take the church to them. I'll plan a series of cottage meetings." The fourteen families that were discovered during the first days of the minister's calling lived in the vicinity of a crossroads. It was a strategic road and community center. Here the first meeting was held. His efforts were rewarded with the attendance of thirty-four persons. Everybody present seemed to enjoy the meeting, and it was decided to hold the meetings regularly every other week.

"The results were better than I anticipated," said the minister. "The average attendance for the season was thirty-one. During the course of the gatherings, I baptized nine children, received four adults into the church; but the finest thing of all is the splen-

did group of loyal, interested and helpful members who are functioning for the church and the kingdom."

Who will say that the old "six-cylinder" did not pay for herself?

The programs of these homestead meetings were divided into three parts: the first half-hour was devoted to singing; the next hour to prayer, testimonies, comments and papers on a previously assigned Bible lesson, and religious songs; and the remainder of the evening was devoted to play, according to a program previously arranged by the social program committee.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. What is meant by the "outposts" of the church?
2. Why are the outposts neglected?
3. What result follows the abandonment of the country church?
4. Shall the outposts be abandoned? Why?
5. Describe the two classes of the rural outposts.
6. What solution is suggested for the first class of outposts?
7. What solution is suggested for the second class?

8. Tell about Rev. Mr. McCormick's achievement.

9. Are there any outpost opportunities in your community? If so, remember, rural America invites you.

XVI

FORWARD-LOOKING CHURCHES

AS a preliminary study to some of the more fundamental problems of the rural church, and their solutions, I presented the cases of five backward-looking rural churches (Chapter II.). In the light of the discussions of remedial measures in the preceding chapters, let us now consider the cases of a few forward-looking rural churches.

1. The Frontier Church.

It was in Bellingham, Wash., when the roses were in full bloom, that my presence was discovered by Rev. J. M. Canse, district superintendent of the Bellingham District in the Puget Sound Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He told me that I must go out by stage on the following Sunday to a certain rural church in his district, and speak to the people and meet the preacher in charge. As he would not take "No" for an answer, I went.

Fifteen miles out, beside the woods, at a crossing of roads, stands a small frame church building. On the outside, it looks unimpressive, like thousands of other rural churches throughout the length and breadth of our country. On the inside, the building was neither ceiled nor plastered.

I entered alone. Sunday-school services were in progress. What a school! Big and little, middle-aged and old, children of all ages—everybody was there. The community had gone up to the house of God on the Lord's Day.

Every one stayed for church. The interest was keen. It was very plain even to the casual observer that something was moving that countryside.

As usual, that something was the live, progressive preacher—and his wife. They had been on the field but two years, where they came direct from a ministerial course in a church school. In his studies the preacher had considered the rural church. He was fired with the ambition to try his efforts at a rural pastorate. This charge was his opportunity.

This rural preacher and his brave wife went to work with a will. The charge was

about ten miles in diameter; he and she had tramped over the whole of it twice during each of the first two years. At the time of my visit, he was considering the proposition of "Fording" it in the future. They well deserve the luxury (?) of an automobile.

They had called at each home, knew everybody by name on sight, understood something of the conditions of the home life in each cottage in the woods, and had developed a lively interest and sympathy for these pioneer people.

The secret of the evident success of this forward-looking rural church, in a community where the circumstances of life are often hard and frequently unpromising, lies, as usual, in the heart and life of the leader. The success and social enterprise of the community is in his preacher; and it was there even before he came. When he came, the bud of social possibilities burst into the full blossom of religious awakening for that whole community.

O Lord, send us *good rural* preachers.

2. The Rehabilitated Church.

A minister of enthusiasm, energy and vision; a large, well-to-do and growing mem-

bership; a history reaching back nearly a century and a quarter; and two missions, one in a small town at a railroad station two miles distant, and the other at a rural schoolhouse—these are the chief features of interest connected with the rehabilitation of the old Licking Church in central Ohio. The first and the last features are the essential elements; to them, therefore, we shall direct our attention.

About A. D. 1910 this particular church was falling into a bad way. The congregation was fast dwindling; only a few of the steadfast ones still clung together for occasional worship. The parsonage was fast getting out of repair, and the weeds had taken the small place of about two acres. The parsonage barn was tumbling in. The older people of the community became careless of religious matters; worldliness prompted their actions and desires, and the young people were going to the devil. The community was in the last stages of "ruralchurchitis."

In a certain near-by city there was, at that time, a young dentist, country born and reared, who was religiously inclined, and whose annual income was about two thousand dollars, but whose health was in a very pre-

carious condition. "To the country" seemed to him both advisable and desirable.

The church needed a preacher, and the man needed a rural job. It happened that both church and dentist-preacher were of the Baptist fellowship, and each mutually agreeable to the other. The salary to be paid for services rendered was less than six hundred dollars a year.

The environment of the open country had a stimulating and health-giving effect upon the minister, and the minister's effort soon began to show its achieving results in this country parish.

Community betterment began, as should always be the case, at home. The yard was rid of its weeds, the lawn was put in order, flower-beds and borders were planted, trees trimmed, and the fences repaired. The garden was planned. The members of the church, all of whom were farmers, were requested to plow the parson's garden, and prepare it for planting. This they gladly consented to do, but—well, they had plowed and prepared those two acres many times only to see them produce a fine crop of weeds. The following summer, however, it was demonstrated, to the delight of the whole country-

side, that a *different* preacher now lived in the parsonage, for the truck-patch was planted and tended with the utmost care.

The preacher determined to have a barn. It was agreed that the congregation should donate the necessary lumber, nails and other materials, and help raise the barn, provided the preacher would do the carpentry, which he volunteered.

No one ever expected to hear anything further about the barn, for it was not to be expected that the preacher would do that kind of work. But the old shack of a barn was torn down by the minister himself, and the rubbish cleared away for action. Foundation stones were carefully laid and everything was made ready to begin. However, the materials were not in sight. It took some urging of the committee and several telephone calls before the materials were secured. When the framework was finally completed, the preacher notified the men of the church that everything was in readiness for the barn-raising. This was made a community affair. In a few weeks, a respectable-looking barn graced the parsonage grounds.

The preacher was now ready to get better acquainted with his people. He won one god-

less man by helping him to shear some sheep one afternoon while calling at his homestead. On another occasion he helped a parishioner to thresh wheat, where he measured the grain as it came from the threshing-machine. At another time he papered a room in a sick woman's home. He organized, and was the captain of, a farm-boys' baseball team. A tennis club was formed for the young people of the countryside, equipment procured, and a tennis-court and a croquet-ground made on the site of a piece of waste ground near the parsonage. After some protest on the part of some of the more backward farmers, Saturday afternoons were given up to playing ball, tennis and croquet. The minister and his wife chaperoned a party of farm boys and girls on a two weeks' camping-trip to the lakeside. The new social remedy was beginning to effect a cure.

It is needless to say that some of the old pillars of the church protested at the introduction of these novelties, and some went even so far as to threaten to withdraw from the church. However, the minister was winning the younger generation of the community, and the writer was present when twenty-one of as fine and sturdy young men and

women as he ever saw were taken into full membership in that church.

The work expanded, the salary of the minister was raised, two missions were established in near-by communities for the maintenance of which this farm church held itself responsible; and what, a few years before, threatened to become a dead church, was now not only an active and thriving organization, but was supporting church enterprises for others, giving more for missions than ever before.

There are thousands of similar possibilities among the rural congregations of the United States. The church which first awakens to its opportunities in rural America, and places qualified men in charge of a truly constructive rural program, may hope to realize great things for the kingdom.

Postscript.—There is one more item of interest in connection with this particular instance that must be placed as a kind of addendum to it. When this church was being brought to a high state of social efficiency and spiritual power in the community, a certain city church, wanting a live minister who could bring things to pass, made a bid for

this leader, and easily took him away from the country charge, though he was reluctant to go.

This robbing of the country of ministerial talent is a crime, and the church administrations must find some way to give the country districts in home America better leaders than college students, and stronger men than retired ministers. We must take care of our own first!

3. The Rural Service Church.

A little group of men met as a Brotherhood class during the Sunday-school hour from week to week in the village church at Pennellville, N. Y. The interest was growing, but little of real significance had been done either for the kingdom or the community.

Under the inspiration and leadership of one of the farmers of the community, it was decided to put a little more life and activity into the Brotherhood. Meetings and banquets were planned for mid-week evenings, a committee on membership was appointed, and men and boys of the whole country round about the village, without regard to religious conditions, were invited to at-

tend the mid-week as well as the Sunday meetings.

The response was good. The membership soon crept up to sixty. The banquets became more and more popular. Speakers were invited from the neighboring cities and the university. The friendly and co-operative spirit was beginning to exhibit itself. A committee was appointed to outline a plan for co-operative buying. The plan that was reported was adopted, and negotiations were entered into for purchasing sup-

The Pennellville Creamery and Cheese Factory.

plies, farm machinery, grain, feeds, etc., in carload lots.

A booster committee was elected to secure the location at the village of factories that would require farm products, and to interest capital in the efforts of the community. A $15,000 kraut factory was soon secured. The farmers needed a better market for their milk. Through the efforts of the Brotherhood, a $75,000 creamery and cheese factory was located at Pennellville.

The watchword of this Brotherhood is "Service," and, as an organization, it really serves. At the Sunday meetings, the Bible lessons are studied; at the mid-week meetings, community business is considered. The organization teaches the gospel for the soul welfare of its members; and it looks out for the economic prosperity of its members and the community. Any one who will may join the Brotherhood. Among its members are Protestants and Catholics, Christians and non-Christians. Persons who do not affiliate with the organization, nevertheless receive and welcome the benefits which have been brought to the community through its efforts. From a mere handful of fourteen members, the Brotherhood has grown to an organiza-

tion of two hundred members—enough to make an effective force in any rural community.

The community is a better place to live in because of this Christian organization, born in, and fostered by, the local church.

The church at Pennellville, through its Brotherhood, is making men—men of Christian service and trust. Within the past year many men from this brotherhood have been elected to positions of honor and responsibility. One man has been elected president of the village of Adams; another, president of the Oswego County Farm Bureau; another, lecturer of the New York State Grange; another, re-elected State Director of the Dairymen's League; and another, president of the Oswego County Cow Improvement Association. The influence of this heretofore almost unheard-of country town is beginning to be felt throughout agricultural New York. "Ye shall know them by their fruits" may be applied to organizations as well as to individuals.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. What lessons may be learned from the story of the frontier church?

2. Tell the story of the rehabilitated church. What do you consider as its most significant lesson?

3. What is your reaction to the postscript?

4. Tell of the achievement of the Brotherhood at Pennellville.

5. Does Christian community service differ from individual Christian service? How?

XVII

THE GREAT PERSONAL INVITATION

THE country invites you, dear reader. If you are now of the country, it invites you to a new and greater service. Do not let the visions of the new ruralism die unrealized in your own life. Do something—do something! All rural America invites you; will you stand unmoved? Even the insensible clod does more than that! If you can not lead, follow. It takes many good followers to make a great leader. Better be a good follower than a stander. A good follower is next to a good leader in importance. Be a loyal ruralist, and, if you can not find a good leader, make one, for good leaders are often made by the loyalty and the insistence of those who desire to be led.

If my dear reader be of the city, but once of the country, remember the days of your youth, and its country home. God bless that country home! May you also bless it; it has blessed you. Perhaps the divine blessing

needs only your assistance; perhaps it is to come through you—through you! Do you suspect it, feel it—yes? Then, your duty is plain—remember Chapter IV. Remember, also: "Never put off till to-morrow what may be done to-day." Your country, the country of your youth that gave you health, strength, soul power, visions and wealth—that beloved country invites you.

The country invites, but does not "call." No weakness, nor imbecility, nor bondage, nor cowardice, nor cringing slavery, nor poverty ever held the country in thralldom. Strength, real strength, is found in the country. There is no rural call, nor cry, but a deep, courteous, serene and strong invitation comes from rural America to our young manhood and young womanhood to enter its doors of great and unsurpassed opportunities.

The country does not "challenge." The country is no fighting warrior, no Goliath, no terror to arouse the passions of fight and unholy contest. Her resources are legion and they may be known to all who go to explore. She reveals her secrets to the sincere inquirer; she yields wealth to the industrious, honor to the honest, upright and able, peace

and contentment to the pure and true, strength and health to those who frequent her great out-of-doors and live in harmony with her laws. The open country, and the hamlets that lie on her great bosom, invite.

Could the invitation be more personal?

This is a great invitation. It comes from millions in population and wealth. You may serve them all—that, indeed, would be a great invitation to service. You may serve only a part, but yet that part may still be a great invitation. Indeed, no invitation that you may be fortunate enough to receive from the country may to-day be disregarded. It may be your greatest opportunity.

Luther Burbank, the "Wizard of California;" Joe Wing, the "Ohio Apostle of Alfalfa," and Jessie Field, the "Corn Lady of Iowa," are examples of what the country will bestow upon those who heed her invitation. Even Johnnie Appleseed, who planted the seeds of the apple tree in the clearings of the pioneers, that the later settlers might have trees for orchards, bears a fame that will ever be cherished by the country people of the Middle West.

Count it and honor, therefore, if you receive an invitation to share, be it ever so

small, any portion of the opportunity of rural America.

The invitation is holy! The scientific aspect may appeal to you; but when you work scientifically you are working through and in harmony with the laws of Nature and the God who made Nature what she is. The co-operative prospect may win you; but in this you become an organizer of men, the children of God. The moral and religious visions may compel you; but then you become the servant of God. Any sphere of rural service that you may enter is a holy service. The farmer, the rural teacher, the community doctor and the country preacher—these are to be your associates in the country. What a good man or woman you will have to be to maintain your place among these! Work in the country is a service of brotherly love, and its blessings and rewards are sweet and sure.

May you, dear reader, be chosen for the better country life.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Have you heard the rural invitation? If not, are you listening? If so, what are you going to do about it?

2. Why is the invitation holy?

APPENDIX

THE JOSEPH SLOCUM COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

IN several places in this book, I have urged upon city people of means the desirability of establishing adequate facilities for the purpose of assisting to make rural life more efficient. I have also shown the advisability of establishing rural departments and a few agricultural colleges in connection with the Christian universities.

The Joseph Slocum College of Agriculture of Syracuse University affords an admirable example in this connection. Mrs. Russell Sage, of New York City, founded the Joseph Slocum College of Agriculture in memory of her father, Joseph Slocum, who was a leader among farmers and deeply interested in the advancement of farming as a science, an art, and a business.

Mrs. Sage has erected a magnificent building on the campus of Syracuse University

as the home of the college. It is probably the finest agricultural college in the United States, costing $400,000.

Through this college Mrs. Sage is offering an incalculable service to rural America. The college is a unit in a great Christian

The Joseph Slocum College of Agriculture of Syracuse University

university, it is in no way supported by State or federal taxation, and is not limited in its service by either State or national boundaries. The college is at the service of the rural people everywhere.

The rural church is an institution of special interest to The Joseph Slocum Col-

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In the spiritualization of American agriculture, and the betterment of country life, The Joseph Slocum College of Agriculture will have a large share. No better nor more appropriate way could have been chosen by any person to perpetuate the memory of a great and good farmer alike among city and country people.

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